ESSA IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING TOOL

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), state chiefs and their leadership teams have developed Consolidated State Plans to guide implementation of ESSA-related activities and provide a foundation for a comprehensive strategy to advance college- and career-readiness for all students. States developed Consolidated State Plans through collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders, carefully considering different elements of the education system, such as accountability systems and supports for struggling schools and districts.

This tool is designed to guide state teams through a reflection and planning process related to ongoing ESSA implementation based on implementation and improvement sciences. For many states, the ESSA Plan submitted for purposes of federal compliance is likely only one slice of an overall comprehensive strategy. Although this tool focuses on some of the key elements of Consolidated State Plans, states may benefit from also considering the broad range of education plans and initiatives taking place across the state and identify intersections with ESSA implementation plans.

How to Use This Resource

This tool provides states with an implementation plan template. The template includes brief introductions to the implementation practices being used, instructions to the completing team, and examples of planning formats. The examples and their respective formats may be used or modified as appropriate for the state's specific comprehensive strategy. The template also includes topic-specific reflection questions for state teams to consider. These are not intended to be a comprehensive list of everything state teams will need to address; rather, these questions are designed to prompt thinking about the range of issues state teams may be considering and how to set the team up for continuous improvement. This template can support states in defining success for state and local implementation efforts, identifying implementation metrics and timelines, and considering revisions to state plans in the future based on new stakeholder input, research findings and monitoring and evaluation results. In addition, this tool provides considerations for state educational agency (SEA) staff around how to work across teams, as many ESSA implementation activities may cut across multiple teams within the SEA. The core implementation team can take the lead on facilitating this cross-team collaboration.

Additional planning resources are included in Appendix A.

Section 1: Planning and Implementation Overview

Advance planning for implementation is a crucial component of success. For many aspects of ESSA implementation, the steps and processes involved may not be linear or discrete; instead, it is more likely that many implementation steps and processes may need to happen concurrently. Likewise, SEA staff may need to develop implementation plans and timelines to ensure staff have the resources to conduct relevant activities.

As SEA staff develop and put implementation plans into action, it is important to also consider how implementation activities will unfold over time. According to the principles of implementation science, there are four main stages of implementation: exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005). The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) has detailed descriptions of these four stages and related research on their website, available here: https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation/implementation-stages.

- During the *exploration* phase, SEA staff ensure that colleagues are ready to implement and create a plan for the work that is cost efficient and likely to succeed.
- During the *installation* phase, SEA staff secure the resources needed (including personnel, such as the ESSA implementation team described in the following section).
- During *initial implementation*, the SEA staff involved in implementation efforts adopt and refine new practices and activities, such as learning how to work across different teams or offices. At this stage, SEA staff may benefit from carefully considering how to leverage specific implementation drivers, such as recruitment and selection of staff or performance assessments (for more information on implementation drivers, see NIRN's *Implementation Drivers: Assessing Best Practices* at https://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/sites/implementation.fpg.unc.edu/files/NIRN-ImplementationDriversAssessingBestPractices.pdf).
- During *full implementation*, the majority of state staff involved in implementation efforts are involved in the work and supporting activities effectively.

SEA staff may consider how each of these stages of implementation is likely to correspond with the timelines for major ESSA implementation milestones. For more information on implementation timelines and milestones, see the *ESSA Implementation Timeline* resource from the Council of Chief State School Officers, available here: https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/ESSA%20Implementation%20Timeline%20Resource.pdf.

ESSA Implementation Team

This section of the *ESSA Implementation Planning Tool* identifies the implementation team that has the task of intentionally monitoring and supporting implementation. The implementation team is accountable for the success of the Consolidated State Plan. This team may be similar to the team that worked to develop the Consolidated State Plan but may also include other individuals who will play a more active role in implementation. This team will likely also include the "core" implementation team of approximately three to twelve individuals who are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Consolidated State Plan. The full implementation team also includes individuals who, collectively, have the expertise necessary to implement the new program or practices within the Consolidated State Plan and to develop and maintain the system and infrastructures to support effective implementation. Members of the implementation team should represent different practice, administrative leadership, and policy perspectives, including key individuals such as the state communications director. Some SEAs may have limited staff capacity, which may necessitate frequent engagement with other staff within the SEA and/or stakeholders.

The implementation team may also wish to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to describe how the implementation team functions, communicates, makes decisions, and moves forward with its mission and objectives. A Memorandum of Understanding establishes a common understanding of why the team has been formed, what is expected of team members, and what processes will be used to do the work. For more information on creating a Memorandum of Understanding, see the *Tools to Support the Development of a Coherent and Aligned System* resource from NIRN, available here: https://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/sites/implementation.fpg.unc.edu/files/NIRN-Education-ToolsToSupportTheDevelopmentOfACoherentAndAlignedSystem.pdf.

Action Step: Identify the core members of the implementation team and their roles, including the lead or coordinator role. Add additional lines as needed to the table.

Core Implementation Team Members

Name of Team Member	Role

Action Step: Identify the additional members of the implementation team and their roles, including their specific activities or milestones in which they are engaged as applicable. Add additional lines as needed to the table.

Additional Implementation Team Members

Name of Team Member	Role

Engaging Stakeholders and Developing a Communications Strategy

Key Takeaways: Engaging Stakeholders and Developing a Communications Strategy

- Identify critical communication and implementation milestones.
- Develop action plan for engaging with stakeholders, including local education agency (LEA) staff.

State leaders conducted extensive outreach and stakeholder engagement throughout the ESSA Consolidated State Plan development process. To promote sustainability, it is critical to turn these connections with stakeholder groups into long-term relationships that you can maintain throughout implementation and broaden in the future to involve a wider range of stakeholders in ongoing ESSA implementation. The implementation team, including the state's communications director, or other designee tasked with stakeholder engagement efforts, should be involved in developing a long-term plan for how and when the SEA will engage with and communicate to stakeholders on an ongoing basis, including key points in time during which communication and engagement may be especially critical. SEA staff may also consider what the main touchpoints are with LEA staff during implementation and how to utilize these touchpoints to ensure effective use of LEA funds and alignment between LEA activities and state priorities.

SEAs should strongly consider taking time to reflect on the stakeholder engagement process they used during the development of the Consolidated State Plan and evaluate which strategies have worked well and which areas can be improved upon in the future. SEAs may involve stakeholders in this evaluation process to ensure the implementation team is collecting meaningful input to continuously improve engagement efforts through implementation. Consider taking the following steps before or during engagement efforts related to implementation:

1. Reflect internally as an SEA (including but not limited to members of the implementation team) on the stakeholder engagement strategies and processes used during the development of the Consolidated State Plan.
2. Reflect externally with your stakeholders on the stakeholder engagement strategies and processes during the development of the Consolidated State Plan.
3. Define goals for future engagement.
4. Develop a sustainable, long-term action and staffing plan to engage stakeholders in implementation.
5. Communicate clearly with stakeholders about the next steps.

In addition, as the SEA reflects internally and externally on stakeholder engagement efforts, the implementation team may consider using the following strategies to ensure stakeholders remain engaged throughout implementation:

- **Build on relationships cultivated during the ESSA plan development process**.
  - Use the contact information collected from people who participated in engagement activities in person or online; send out information on the final ESSA plan once it is approved and ask them to stay engaged.
  - Send regular updates to contacts throughout the process to update them on changes that are made and to alert them to additional engagement opportunities along the way.
- **Establish or continue ongoing advisory committees**.
  - Create one or multiple advisory committees of stakeholders, or maintain the groups you created through the development process, to work closely with the SEA on an ongoing

basis to ensure that the needs of their communities are continually met after ESSA implementation begins.

➢ **Establish regular check-ins with key external partners.**
   o Schedule quarterly meetings with key external partners to check in on implementation, hear input from their stakeholders and discuss any upcoming changes or shifts in policy or data collection activities. Ask the representatives of these groups to provide a feedback loop and regularly communicate about implementation progress with their members.
   o Work with civil rights, advocacy groups, and organizations that represent disability or historically underserved communities to identify members of key stakeholder groups to appoint to ongoing committees that will continue to meet throughout ESSA implementation and beyond.

➢ **Plan ahead for key implementation milestones**.
   o Be transparent about when stakeholders will have opportunities to engage with the state during implementation. Identify regular points in the state's ESSA implementation when stakeholder input will be needed, publish them on your website, and share them with your key external partners and ambassadors.
   o Seek out new ways to stay engaged with stakeholders, such as using social media, partnering with community-based organizations, or making return visits to historically underserved communities and proactively reaching out to them on a regular basis.

Please see CCSSO's resource Let's Keep this Conversation Going, available at https://ccsso.org/resource-library/lets-keep-conversation-going, for more information and additional resources.

Section 2: Planning for ESSA Consolidated State Plan Implementation

The remaining sections of the ESSA Implementation Plan outline the specific action planning components related to key priority areas of the Consolidated State Plan, including the implementation schedule and milestones. A brief description of the planning structure and its components are described, followed by a list of key implementation supports.

NOTE: Do not complete this section. This is an explanation of the template used for the subsequent sections.

GUIDE TO FILLING OUT THE ESSA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Priority Area:	Identify the specific priority area(s) such as Accountability System, Challenging Academic Standards, Academic Assessments, State Support to Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools and Targeted Support and Improvement Schools, Supporting Excellent Educators, State Support and Academic Enrichment, and others.
Goals and Objectives:	Write a broad statement of what you hope to accomplish related to this priority area as included in your ESSA plan or state strategic plan. Describe the specific measurable end-products of this priority area. Objectives should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-framed.
Performance Measures:	Demonstrate in this section how you will know you are making progress on implementing processes and strategies in alignment with your goals, objectives, and theory of action. State specifically what you will measure to determine whether changes have occurred. Select indicators of progress for both the short term (one or two years) and long term (three to five years). Specify the data source you will use for those indicators (or your plan to develop a data system if necessary). Types of data to inform your monitoring of progress should include the following: • program/process data (e.g., enrollment data, reach data, financial data) • fidelity data (e.g., are we doing what we said we do and how well) • outcome data (e.g., impact on academic, attendance, behavior, teacher retention)
Activity:	Outline the major tasks or actions you will take to achieve each objective. The activities are the "how" portion of the action plan. Recommend identifying activities chronologically by start dates. Place each activity in a separate row and add as many rows as you need to the template. See guidance below on activities needed to secure resources and make the necessary structural and instrumental changes needed to support effective implementation. These include activities related to creating readiness, providing staff training and coaching, revising or developing administrative policies and procedures to ensure system alignment, identifying technology and data needs to support implementation including fidelity, and obtaining necessary resources and community connections. In

	addition, specific questions for each priority area are provided to serve as prompts for consideration when planning.
Timeframe:	State the projected start and end date for each activity.
Lead Person/Team	Identify by name the team or key person who will initiate the activity, provide direction for the work, and monitor progress.
Resources Required:	Include all resources needed for this action step (e.g., funding, staff time, space needs, supplies, technology, equipment, and key partners).
Anticipated Result:	Describe the direct, tangible, and measurable results of the activity or criteria for successful completion (e.g., a product or document, an agreement or policy, number of participants).

Consider the following necessary infrastructure mechanisms (Fixsen et al. 2005) when identifying and creating objectives and major activities for your respective ESSA priority areas.

Keys to Implementation: Organizational and Policy Supports and Resources
Practice/Initiative/Program Selection **What processes, guidelines, or criteria do you use for selecting evidence-based practices?**
Data Systems for Decision Making   - What will be your implementation team's responsibilities related to supporting the quality of the data collection for implementation and impact, analysis, and report preparation processes (support, guidance, oversight)?   - What data (e.g., programmatic, capacity, fidelity) will be used to monitor and measure implementation and impact?   - How will data be used to support communication, decision making, and continuous improvement (e.g., when, who, decision rules)?
Leadership and Policy   - What are your implementation team's responsibilities related to ensuring that the necessary supports, guidelines, policies, and procedures support the implementation of the innovation and promote student outcomes?   - What changes are needed in how your SEA is organized internally or works across teams to support implementation efforts?   - How and when will policies, procedures, and processes be revised or developed to support the new way of work?   - What are your implementation team's responsibilities related to ensuring that system barriers are identified, solutions proposed, or issues raised at the appropriate level of the state system?   - How will resources or funding be secured, reallocated, or leveraged?   - What are the team's active processes to ensure that leadership decisions are fed back down the system to those carrying out the new way of work?

Keys to Implementation: Staff Competency Supports and Resources

Participant and Staff Selection
• What processes, guidelines, or criteria do you use when selecting the following:
    o staff to lead the initiative or the work?
    o teams and team members needed to support the implementation of initiatives?

Training /Professional Learning • What part does the state play in the identification, development, and delivery of professional development or learning needed for staff to support use of the innovation or practices (e.g., school improvement coaches; SEA staff overseeing principal supervisor and mentoring initiatives; SEA staff supporting new teacher licensure credentialing program, SEA staff interpreting results of new accountability system)? • How is the SEA made aware of professional development or learning needs? • Who are providers and partners in professional development or learning? • What are the quality indicators for professional development or learning in the state?
Coaching • How does your training and professional learning incorporate a coaching function to provide ongoing support and skill development for SEA staff supporting use of the innovation or practice? • What will be your implementation team's responsibilities related to supporting the quality of the coaching process (e.g., support, guidance, oversight)?

Making Connections Across ESSA Priority Areas

Adjust and modify the planning structure as needed to best align with specific planning for this priority.

Key Takeaways: Cross-Cutting Cohesion

- Identify key leverage points for local implementation.
- Identify opportunities for coherence and connections across priority areas, teams, and offices.

As the SEA implements the Consolidated State Plan, it may be helpful to consider some of the opportunities for state leadership across the education system and across ESSA that will help shape your support to and interactions with districts and schools. These opportunities cut across the specific priority areas included in the remainder of this tool and serve as key leverage points for the broader state education system. Examples of some key opportunities to consider are given below:

- Have you assessed your current SEA policies and practices for use of federal grant funds? Are they aligned with your state education objectives (such as accountability policies and state priorities), and do they promote sound educational programming? For more information, please see the following:
  - Maximizing ESSA Formula Funds for Students: State Readiness Self-Assessment from CCSSO, available at https://ccsso.org/resource-library/maximizing-essa-formula-funds-students-state-readiness-self-assessment.
  - Decision Guide for Implementing ESSA: State Considerations for Effective Grant Programs from CCSSO, available at https://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/CCSSO%20Decision%20Guide%20for%20Implementing%20ESSA%2012-5-2016.pdf.
  - A Guide to SEA Oversight Responsibilities under ESSA: The Role of the State in the Local Implementation of ESSA Programs from CCSSO, available at https://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/CCSSO_State_Authority_Over_ESSA_Programs.pdf.
- How are you advancing priorities through local applications for funds and local school improvement plans?
- Have you reviewed the different types of federally required needs assessments and considered how you can maximize their impact? (For more information, please see CCSSO's resource, Understanding Federally Required Education Policy Needs Assessments and Maximizing Their Impact at https://ccsso.org/resource-library/understanding-federally-required-education-policy-needs-assessments-and-maximizing.
- How are you connecting your early learning and high school transition efforts and staff to the ESSA implementation process?
- How are you connecting your special education efforts (e.g., State Systemic Improvement Plans) to the ESSA implementation process?

Challenging State Academic Standards and Assessments

Adjust and modify the planning structure as needed to best align with specific planning for this priority.

Key Takeaways: Challenging State Academic Standards and Assessments

- Plan for ensuring alignment of assessments and standards over time.
- Identify supports and systems for ensuring effective practices around standards and assessments at the local level.

Goals and Objectives

In setting goals and objectives, consider the goals and measures already set forth in the Consolidated State Plan or other state plans. For some sections, the goals you have already established will likely fit well; in others, you may decide that you want to develop more issue-specific goals.

Goals:
Objectives:

Performance Measures (How will we know we are making progress in the short term? long term?)

Select performance measures for both the short term (one to two years) and long term (three to five years) for your implementation activities. Specify the data source you will use for those performance measures (or your plan to develop a data system if necessary). Data sources may include the following:

- program/process data (e.g., enrollment data, reach data, financial data)
- fidelity data (e.g., are we doing what we said we will do and how well)
- outcome data (e.g., impact on academic, attendance, behavior, teacher retention)

Performance Measures	Data Source

Action Plan

Consider the following questions when action planning for this specific priority area:

Challenging academic standards: questions to consider

- How will you continue to track whether state assessments remain aligned to your state's challenging academic standards, and how will you know whether local assessments are also aligned in this way, now and over time?
- What actions are needed to ensure communication and alignment between your plan for challenging academic standards and its intersection with planning for Supporting Effective Instruction, school improvement supports, or other components of your system?
- What supports will your state provide to local districts and schools for developing deep knowledge of your state's challenging academic standards and using aligned instructional practices to attain those standards (e.g., for new or revised standards)?

Challenging academic assessments: questions to consider

- Are you making any changes to your assessments that you anticipate will impact your accountability system?
  - If so, have you started discussions about the impact of those changes, including how and when new data from those assessments will be used for identification purposes?
  - Have you communicated these changes with districts, principals, educators, and other stakeholders?
  - Have you identified technology needs or other resources necessary to support changes in assessments (e.g., technology for use of computer adaptive tests (Section 1111(b)(2)(J))?
- Are you considering working with your districts on any assessment audits?
- How will you continue to track whether proficiency on your statewide assessments is in alignment with your state's challenging academic standards?

Action Plan Continued

Activities	Time Frame	Person(s)/Team Responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated Result/Criterion

Statewide Accountability System

Adjust and modify the planning structure as needed to best align with specific planning for this priority.

Key Takeaways: Statewide Accountability System

- Create a long-term plan for implementation and system evaluation.
- Identify key supports and activities to support data systems.
- Identify processes for managing data on special populations over time.

Goals and Objectives

In setting goals and objectives, consider the goals and measures already set forth in the Consolidated State Plan or other state plans. For some sections, the goals you have already established will likely fit well; in others you may decide that you want to develop more issue-specific goals.

Goals:
Objectives:

Performance Measures (How will we know we are making progress in the short term? long term?)

Select performance measures for both the short term (one to two years) and long term (three to five years) for your implementation activities. Specify the data source you will use for those measures (or your plan to develop a data system if necessary). Data sources may include the following:

- program/process data (e.g., enrollment data, reach data, financial data)

- fidelity data (e.g., are we doing what we said we will do and how well)
- outcome data (e.g., impact on academic, attendance, behavior, teacher retention)

Performance Measures	Data Source

Action Plan

Consider the following questions when action planning for this specific priority area:

Overall accountability system implementation

- Have you developed an overall timeline for your accountability system implementation?
    - What is your target date for reporting your annual meaningful differentiation in each year?
- Are there any new indicators planned for future implementation? If so, what is the process for this?
    - How does your data collection need to change?
    - How will you review whether they are being used as intended and are the right measures (after the first year and beyond)?
    - How will you continuously improve them over time?

Accountability system data

- Do you need to make any changes to data collection for measures you have already been collecting?
- What new data are you collecting?
    - How are your accountability team and data team collaborating on this issue?
- What actions are needed to address any technology needs to support data collection for new and existing measures?
- What professional learning supports are needed for your accountability team to support data collection for new indicators?
- What is your process for ensuring data quality? What is the annual timeline for this?
- What is your communication strategy for engaging with district and school leaders about new data collection requirements? What support will you be providing? How are these communication strategies connected to efforts around report cards?
- What is your process for ensuring that data are clearly displayed in a user-friendly format for the public? How are you collaborating with your data and communications teams about revisions needed to your data dashboard/reporting pages?

- Have you discussed the information you will be collecting in detail with your school improvement team? How are they considering using this data to support school improvement efforts (for example, is it integrated into the needs assessment process)? What supports will your school improvement team need to use the data (e.g., training and resources to support data interpretation)?
- What processes are you putting in place to know if the indicators you selected are driving the desired behaviors that you identified as part of the purpose of your accountability system and what processes will be in place for improving or changing indicators if they are not? If you have research staff, how might they be involved in this process of continuous improvement of indicators?
- What is your communication strategy for engaging with district leaders about the new accountability system results? How will you inform and provide assistance to district leaders regarding how they can use the results to make decisions and support schools? Have you provided support to district leaders on how they will communicate the new accountability system and results to school leaders?

Incorporating English learners (ELs) into Title I accountability: questions to consider
- What is your strategy for collaboration among your data team, EL team, and accountability team?
- What is your process for reviewing and analyzing your state data to track progress of EL students?
- If cut scores for your academic assessments or English language proficiency assessments have or are changing, what is your process for continuing to analyze data as you get more information and for making adjustments as needed?
- What process are you putting in place to analyze whether the expected timelines for EL proficiency are appropriate and are playing out as anticipated in your accountability system?
- Are state policy changes needed to support incorporation of ELs into Title I accountability? If so, what actions are needed to make those changes happen?
- Getting beyond compliance, what ideas/aspirations do you have for data use to support this population at both state and local levels?

Identifying TSI and CSI schools: questions to consider
- Have you clearly articulated how your meaningful system of differentiation aligns with the identification of CSI and TSI schools?
  - What are the different timelines?
  - When can school and district leaders expect to know their status? How does this correspond with funding and school improvement plan timelines?
- What are the implications of identification? For example, how are you communicating supports to these schools, and expectations for improvement? How are your data team, accountability team, school improvement team, and communications team collaborating on this specifically?
- How will identification for these supports and interventions intersect with any improvement efforts for all schools? How are you communicating this?
- How are your accountability team and data team collaborating to prepare for the different types of analysis for each category of identification?

- What process are you putting in place to monitor if the identification criteria are identifying the "right" schools? Will you revisit your identification criteria in the near and long term based on improvement data?
- How is information being shared with and used by your school improvement team about the reason a school is identified?
- How are you supporting the development and use of comprehensive needs assessments (including deeper diagnostic review) for CSI and possibly TSI plans?
- How are you leveraging the state's resource equity analysis to revisit funding equity and to inform school improvement efforts?
- What is your strategy for communicating with schools and districts about TSI and CSI identification?

Action Plan Continued

Activities	Time Frame	Person(s)/Team Responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated Result/Criterion

School Support and Improvement Activities

Adjust and modify the planning structure as needed to best align with specific planning for this priority.

Key Takeaways: School Support and Improvement Activities

- Identify approaches to identification, data collection, and monitoring.
- Identify strategies to support educators in identified schools.

Goals and Objectives

In setting goals and objectives, consider the goals and measures already set forth in the Consolidated State Plan or other state plans. For some sections, the goals you have already established will likely fit well; in others, you may decide that you want to develop more issue-specific goals.

Goals:
Objectives:

Performance Measures (How will we know we are making progress in the short term? long term?)

Select performance measures for both the short term (one to two years) and long term (three to five years) for your implementation activities. Specify the data source you will use for those measures (or your plan to develop a data system if necessary). Data sources may include the following:

- program/process data (e.g., enrollment data, reach data, financial data, teacher attendance data)
- fidelity data (e.g., are we doing what we said we will do and how well)
- outcome data (e.g., impact on academic, attendance, behavior, teacher retention)

Measures	Data Source

Action Plan

Consider the following questions when action planning for this specific priority area:

Overall school support and identification processes

- Have you developed an overall timeline for key milestones related to school improvement (e.g., when different identifications will be made, when districts will need to have needs assessments completed, when applications for funding and school improvement plans are due, when professional development and support to LEAs and schools will be provided)? Have those been shared with practitioners?
- Have you discussed your needs assessment process and how you may want to consider revising it given changes to your accountability system and needs of districts? For example, if you are collecting new data, how is that being incorporated into the needs assessment process?
- How will the SEA partner with districts to help them improve low-performing schools, and how will SEA support to LEAs be differentiated or prioritized (such as by the LEA's capacity, commitment to change, and whether they have a clear and compelling strategy)? Is this approach transparent and clear to practitioners?
- What is your state's approach for working with LEAs to ensure that CSI and TSI schools are progressing? What support do you foresee LEAs needing for them to effectively support CSI and TSI schools? What will be your ongoing communication strategy with LEAs in support of CSI and TSI schools?
- How will you know and how will districts know if interventions were used as intended and are effective in TSI and CSI schools? If you have research staff or partnerships, how will they be involved in this effort?
- How does the state's support to CSI and TSI schools fit in with the state's overall approach to driving continuous improvement for all schools and districts and enhancing the equitable distribution of effective teachers and leaders? How does your state's strategic plan (if applicable) map out continuous improvement, and what are the milestones for this work?
- How will your state's 1003(a) LEA application, funding criteria, technical assistance, and monitoring approach encourage use of evidenced-based practices, as required in ESSA? (Please see CCSSO's website (www.ccsso.org/essa for additional resources.)

<u>Supporting educators</u>

- What is your state's strategy for supporting school leaders in high-need schools? If you are using the optional set-aside of Title II funds for school leadership initiatives, how will these funds support or complement your strategies for school improvement?
- How will your coaching, professional development, and monitoring routines need to change? What support will your SEA and regional (as applicable) staff need to use revised coaching, professional development, and monitoring routines?
- What is your strategy for collaboration across the SEA to maximize your capacity and streamline efforts for schools and districts?
    - How is your school improvement team collaborating with your educator team on teacher and leader effectiveness in low-performing schools?
    - How is your school improvement team collaborating with your accountability and data teams on school identification, exit, and progress monitoring?
    - How is your school improvement team collaborating with your special education and EL teams on supporting schools to increase performance among these populations, particularly in TSI schools?
    - How is your school improvement team collaborating with others in the agency in designing an LEA application that streamlines requirements and requests of CSI and TSI schools?

(Please see CCSSO's Principles of Effective School Improvement *Systems*, available at https://ccsso.org/resource-library/ccsso-principles-effective-school-improvement-systems, for more information.)

Action Plan Continued

Activities	Time Frame	Person(s)/Team Responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated Result/Criterion

Supporting Effective Instruction

Adjust and modify the planning structure as needed to best align with specific planning for this priority.

Key Takeaways: Supporting Effective Instruction

- Identify and align strategies for supporting effective educators with funding and other ESSA requirements.
- Identify approaches to supporting effective use of Title II funds.

Goals and Objectives

In setting goals and objectives, consider the goals and measures already set forth in the Consolidated State Plan or other state plans. For some sections, the goals you have already established will likely fit well; in others, you may decide that you want to develop more issue-specific goals.

Goals:
Objectives:

Performance Measures (How will we know we are making progress in the short term? long term?)

Select performance measures for both the short term (one to two years) and long term (three to five years) for your implementation activities. Specify the data source you will use for those measures (or your plan to develop a data system if necessary). Data sources may include the following:

- program/process data (e.g., enrollment data, reach data, financial data)
- fidelity data (e.g., are we doing what we said we will do and how well)
- outcome data (e.g., impact on academic, attendance, behavior, teacher retention)

Performance Measures	Data Source

Action Plan

Consider the following questions when action planning for this specific priority area:

- What is your state's approach to better attracting teachers and leaders to the profession? Preparing teachers and leaders to be ready on day one? Developing teachers and leaders throughout their careers and retaining the most effective educators?
  - How will you know whether these strategies, programs, and policies are promoting equity and ensuring all students have access to effective educators?
  - What existing processes or potential opportunities are in place for these policies and programs to stretch across multiple areas? What actions are needed to revise or create new policies to support the state's approach outlined in the ESSA Plan?
  - Do the strategies in the Consolidated State Plan account for changes in the state's projected funding levels and set-asides over time?
  - Do the proposed activities ensure that educators will have the necessary knowledge and skills to support the proposed accountability model, incorporate changes to EL requirements, and implement the supports and interventions now required as part of the overall school improvement component of ESSA?
- How will you partner with LEAs and stakeholders to ensure understanding of options and flexibilities for use of Title II funds (e.g., professional development for all school staff, teacher leadership positions) as well as requirements for supporting excellent educators?
- What are all the touchpoints between the SEA and LEAs that might influence the use of LEA Title II funds?
- What is the state's approach to ensure local Title II funds are spent on activities that support the state's education goals?
  - How will states ensure that funding for professional development and class-size reduction programs meet the federal guidelines and that the reported results contribute to an evidence-based standard?
  - Does the plan include a robust definition for "evidence-based" that ensures Title II-A funds will be spent on the most effective activities aligned with the state's vision and goals? What supports will the SEA provide to LEAs on using state-identified processes or guidelines in selecting evidence-based practices?

Action Plan Continued

Activities	Time Frame	Person(s)/Team Responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated Result/Criterion

Student Support and Academic Enrichment

Adjust and modify the planning structure as needed to best align with specific planning for this priority.

> *Key Takeaways: Student Support and Academic Enrichment*
>
> - Align Title IV strategies with other ESSA priorities and SEA teams.
> - Identify approaches to collecting data on local Title IV supports and strategies.

Goals and Objectives

In setting goals and objectives, consider the goals and measures already set forth in the Consolidated State Plan or other state plans. For some sections, the goals you have already established will likely fit well; in others, you may decide that you want to develop more issue-specific goals.

Goals (Long-term goal, as listed in ESSA plan and other state plans):
Objectives (Measures of interim progress, as listed in ESSA plan and other state plans):

Performance Measures (How will we know we are making progress in the short term? long term?)

Select performance measures for both the short term (one to two years) and long term (three to five years) for your implementation activities. Specify the data source you will use for those measures (or your plan to develop a data system if necessary). Data sources may include the following:

- program/process data (e.g., enrollment data, reach data, financial data)
- fidelity data (e.g., are we doing what we said we will do and how well)
- outcome data (e.g., impact on academic, attendance, behavior, teacher retention)

Performance Measures	Data Source

Action Plan

Consider the following questions when action planning for this specific priority area:

- How will the strategies you prioritize in Title IV complement your priorities for improvement in schools and college and career readiness among all students?
- What is your strategy for connecting your Title IV team with your accountability, data, and school improvement teams? What is the feedback loop between your accountability and reporting data, effective interventions in schools, and evolving supports offered through Title IV? How will these connections be communicated with LEAs, schools, and stakeholders?
- For the different strategies prioritized, what supports (e.g., professional learning) do state and regional agencies (if applicable) need to support LEAs effectively in their use of the strategies and resources (e.g., instructional practices, intervention practices, school climate, or conditions strategies)? What supports will be offered to LEAs and schools in use of strategies identified for Title IV? What actions are needed to develop or improve those strategies?
- For the different strategies prioritized, what implementation data will you need to collect to determine if strategies are being implemented as intended and are effective? How often will the data be collected and used to support decision making regarding programming, allocation of resources and funds, etc.?

Action Plan Continued

Activities	Time Frame	Person(s)/Team Responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated Result/Criterion

Monitoring of Progress

Implementation teams place a heavy emphasis on the systematic review of data to ensure that any changes to the approach are purposeful and planned rather than reactionary or opportunistic. Many initiatives fail for lack of study and reflection on what is actually being done and what the results are from having done it. "Improvement Cycles" make the connection between what has been built and how well it serves (form and function). Plan/Do/Check/Act (PDSA) cycles are a strategy implementation teams can use to make meaningful changes, alleviate barriers, embed solutions, and improve intended outcomes. The activities of PDSA cycles include the following:

- ***Plan**—Identify barriers or challenges, using data whenever possible, and specify the plan to move programs or interventions forward as well as the outcomes that will be monitored.*
- ***Do**—Carry out the strategies or plan as specified to address the challenges.*
- ***Study**—Use the measures identified during the planning phase and collected during the "do" phase to assess and track progress.*
- ***Act**—Make changes to the next iteration of the plan to improve implementation.*

The implementation team should monitor and track the results of actions frequently (e.g., at least monthly) to engage in celebration of successes and problem solving using data and PDSA cycles for the different priority areas.

Questions to ask when monitoring the implementation plan:

- Based on review of progress indicator data, are the implementation activities overall on track within specified timelines?
- What has worked well or been accomplished?
- What barriers or challenges to progress have been encountered?
- What actions can be taken to remove barriers if encountered?
- What resources are needed to support continued progress on implementation activities?
- What is the progress for specific activities relevant to this monitoring review period?
- What changes are needed to the implementation activities?
- What information about progress needs to be communicated and to who?

Action Step: The results of monitoring implementation of the plan can be captured using the following table for the different components and areas of the ESSA Implementation Plan. A status indicator can be used to denote overall status such as On Track (on schedule within budget), At Risk (attention required for potential issues and challenges with potential to compromise schedule, budget, etc.), Off Track (attention required for issues and challenges resulting in schedules not being met, over budget, or out of scope, etc.). Create additional monitoring tables as needed for the different components. Adjust and modify the monitoring structure as needed to best align with planning for the specific component of the ESSA Implementation Plan.

Date of Monitoring Review:

Component or Area of Plan:		Overall Status: On Track, At Risk, Off Track
Major Accomplishments	**Concerns/Challenges**	**Additional Resources Needed**
Specific Activities	**Progress/Results**	**Follow up Actions Needed**

Version History

Implementation is monitored over time and informed by data. Changes in implementation plans should be captured and monitored to provide information on how the development and distribution of the Implementation Plan was controlled and tracked.

Use the following table to provide the version number, the lead author implementing the version, the date of the version, the name of the individual approving the version, the date that particular version was approved, and a brief description of the reason for creating the revised version.

Version Number	Implemented By	Revision Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Reason
1.0					

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Appendix A: Research, Readiness, and Resources

Research Basis of the Implementation Plan Template

The Active Implementation Frameworks (AIFs; Fixsen et al. 2005) serve as the basis of this tool to guide implementation. Specifically, this tool guides the development of the implementation infrastructure or building blocks needed to support practice, organizational, and systems change using a stage-based approach, iterative data cycles, and bidirectional feedback loops. These implementation practices have been found to be crucial to attaining and sustaining outcomes in addition to the implementation practices of purposeful selection of practices to address need, use of readiness assessments, inclusion of stakeholders, and active leadership to cultivate collaborative cultures (Fixsen et al. 2015; Saldana et al. 2012). Furthermore, the practice of aligning initiatives using already existing resources to accomplish coherent systemic goals is paramount (Coburn, Hill, and Spillane 2016; McIntosh et al. 2015; Tseng 2012). These evidence-based implementation practices are provided in Appendix A to support the State's implementation activities for their ESSA Consolidated State Plan.

Readiness Assessments

This section of the ESSA Implementation Plan outlines the readiness assessment activities that are critical to implementation and sustainability. System change is required to meet the ESSA requirements. Thus, understanding the current system will help plan for change and help to manage the change process.

The key purposes of readiness assessments are to examine the degree to which a particular evidence-based model, program, or approach meets the state's needs and whether use of that approach is feasible. Part one of a readiness assessment includes evaluating the goodness of fit between potential practices or innovations and the needs of the educators, students, families, and communities they serve. Potential practices or innovations must have their core components clearly identified and fully defined. Requirements for implementation must be carefully assessed and potential barriers to implementation related to funding, staffing, policies, and procedures examined. Data are collected through needs assessments, program or innovation assessments, and staff and organizational readiness assessments. The information gathered is used in an iterative fashion to come to a decision about the best model, practices, or approach to adopt to meet the needs of the state.

Part 2 of a readiness assessment involves assessing and planning for the infrastructure and systems needed to support the capacities needed among educators, organizations, and the community to initiate and sustain your plan's innovations or practices. Infrastructure and systems to consider may include staff training needs, data systems, and administrative policies and procedures that ensure organizational and systems alignment. Involvement of key stakeholders and development of program champions within the SEA and at the local level are both critical to planning for a strong infrastructure.

Action Step: The core elements of a readiness assessment are provided in the following tables. The tables can be used to capture the results of your assessments using various data sources. If using the following tables, adjust and modify as needed to best align with data sources and tools used to accomplish the analyses.

Readiness Assessment – Part 1	
Needs: Does the innovation, strategy, or set of practices identified meet the needs of our state education system?	
FIT: Does the innovation or strategy fit (or fight) with current projects, context, organizational and systems values and philosophies?	
Resources: What resources will be available for this innovation or strategy? Is reprioritization necessary?	
Evidence: What is the evidence to support that this innovation for the priority area will work given our state needs? What outcomes can we expect if it is done well and as intended?	
Readiness for Use: How well defined is this innovation or strategy? Do we know the core components that make this strategy work? Will program development be necessary? How involved will be the program developer or intermediary organization (e.g., external support to the SEA?)	
Capacity: Can we make the necessary structural, instrumental, and financial changes needed? Do our staff have necessary skills and knowledge (e.g., minimum qualifications) for the innovation or strategy?	

Readiness Assessment - Part 2 (Infrastructure and Systems)	
How open are staff and educators to the new practices or innovations outlined in the plan? What actions will be needed to increase their readiness?	
Are the organizational mission, leadership, and climate aligned with the ESSA Comprehensive State plan? What actions will be needed to address alignment?	
What processes, guidelines, or criteria does our SEA use for selecting improvement initiatives or evidence-based practices to promote to LEAs?	
What processes, guidelines, or criteria do our SEA use when selecting: • Staff to lead the Plan's initiatives/priority areas? • Teams and team members needed to support the implementation of initiatives?	
What is the role of our SEA in professional development for teachers, administrators, families, school boards, etc.? What part does the state play in the identification, development, and delivery of professional development?	
How will our SEA know if implementation activities are happening as planned? Where will our SEA get this data? What technology needs does our SEA have?	
How will our SEA know if the innovation is being used as intended or supported as intended? What data are needed to answer to this question? What technology is needed to do so?	
Does our SEA have sufficient resources to support implementation? What actions are needed to secure resources? Is the funding sustainable?	
What administrative practices may need to change to support implementation? What policies, procedures, processes need to be developed or revised?	
What systems alignment issues will need to be addressed to facilitate implementation?	

Resources

[The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing](#)
These standards include provisions for aligning state assessments to standards across all major academic content areas.

[Considerations for State Leaders in the Design of School Accountability Systems under the Every Student Succeeds Act](#)
This resource provides guidance around how states can meet the key accountability requirements of ESSA.

[From Accountability to Actionability: Making Sense of Multiple Measures in Local Control Accountability Plans](#)
This resource provides key information and recommendations for how districts can improve their process for generating, presenting, and using data in Local Control Accountability Plans.

[Maximizing ESSA Formula Funds for Students: State Readiness Self-Assessment](#)
This resource can help SEAs assess their spending policies over federal funds, planning and budgeting alignment to state priorities and local needs, and paperwork reduction opportunities.

[Decision Guide for Implementing ESSA: State Considerations for Effective Grant Programs](#)
This resource highlights changes under ESSA for Title I, Title II, and Title IV. This resource also includes guiding questions for states to consider around how these changes will impact state policies, procedures, practices, organizational structure, and staff roles and responsibilities.

[A Guide to SEA Oversight Responsibilities under ESSA: The Role of the State in the Local Implementation of ESSA Programs](#)
This resource describes state oversight responsibilities and their role in ESSA implementation at the local level.

[Understanding Federally Required Education Policy Needs Assessments and Maximizing Their Impact](#)
This resource can help states in designing and promoting a comprehensive and aligned needs assessment process, including a summary of the federal requirements for needs assessments.

[Principles of Effective School Improvement](#)
This resource provides ten key principles regarding effective systems to improve or replace low-performing schools.

[States Leading for Equity: Promising Practices for Advancing Equity Commitments](#)
This resource provides examples of state practices and policies around equity.

[Roadmap to the Principles of Effective School Improvement Systems](#)
This resource articulates the core components of effective school improvement systems.