

Illinois State Personnel Development Grant:

***Closing the Gap through Research-Based
Professional Development***

CFDA #: 84.323A

Illinois State Board of Education

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Abstract

The Illinois proposal for a State Personnel Development Grant will address the established priority of *reforming and improving* [state educational agency] *systems for personnel preparation and professional development in early intervention, educational, and transition services in order to improve results for children with disabilities*. The primary, overarching goal of the Illinois State Personnel Development project is: *Establish and implement a coordinated, regionalized system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities, as measured by improved student progress and performance*.

This will be accomplished through establishing four Regional Professional Development Centers that will be collaborative partnerships of local educational agencies, regional providers, institutions of higher education, and parent entities. All centers will provide standardized professional development and technical assistance to educators and parents in their regions, focused on designing and providing early intervening services, with an emphasis on scientific, research-based reading instruction; progress monitoring; response to intervention; and standards-aligned instruction and assessment. School demonstration and data collection sites will be established within each region to facilitate school- and student-level data collection and evaluation. The anticipated outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- Increased knowledge and skills of personnel and parents in the identified professional development focus areas,
- Improved school and student performance due to applying the knowledge and skills, and
- An increase in the number of educators and parents with current information and up-to-date knowledge and skills regarding improving results for individuals with disabilities.

NARRATIVE

Priority

The Illinois *State Personnel Development Grant* project addresses the established USDE priority of “assisting SEAs in reforming and improving their systems for personnel preparation and professional in early intervention, educational, and transition services in order to improve results for children with disabilities.” Grant funds will be used to carry out a) Professional Development Activities and b) Other Activities, as specified in the grant application requirements. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will design and implement **professional development activities** that:

Improve the knowledge of special education and regular education teachers and principals, and in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, concerning effective instructional practices, by providing training in methods of:

- *Scientifically based reading instruction, including early literacy instruction;*
- *Early and appropriate interventions to identify and help children with disabilities; and*
- *Using classroom-based techniques to assist children prior to referral for special education.*

Funds under **other activities** will be used for:

Supporting activities that ensure that teachers are able to use challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement and functional standards, and state assessments for all children with disabilities, to improve instructional practices and improve academic achievement of children with disabilities.

A. Need for Project

- 1) *The extent to which specific gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities*

have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project.

Illinois Overview

Illinois is continually working to decrease the gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructure, and opportunities associated with improving the performance of students with disabilities and the overall student population. There are many needs in Illinois that the SPD Project will help to address, including the areas of student performance, least restrictive environment (LRE), incidence rates and disproportionality, professional development, and personnel.

In 2003-04, 886 public school districts served more than 2 million students age 3 to 21 in Illinois, with populations of fewer than 100 pupils per district to approximately 420,000 pupils enrolled in Chicago Public Schools #299. The delivery system for special education services is complex. If large enough, school districts provide their own services, and if not, services are provided through a special education joint agreement or a multidistrict agreement. Currently, 67 such agreements provide special education and related services to eligible preschool and school-age children with disabilities.

In *Quality Counts 2004* (Education Week, January 8, 2004), Illinois received a grade of “A-” in standards and accountability, a “C” in teacher quality, and a “B-” in school climate.

The grade of “A-” in standards and accountability reflects Illinois efforts to continually improve the alignment of state assessments with the *Illinois Learning Standards*. In fact, Illinois was cited as one of 14 states whose tests are aligned with state standards in each subject at elementary, middle, and high school levels. The state educational system was also credited for having clear and specific learning standards in English, mathematics, and science in elementary, middle, and high schools. Further, state assessments are tied to a school’s performance,

including financial help toward improving poor-performing schools. Even before the sanctions under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), Illinois already had consequences in place for schools that fail to improve, including possible reconstitution.

The grade of “C” for its efforts to improve teacher quality points to a need to focus on new teacher preparation and professional development for veteran teachers. In order to improve progress and achievement of students with disabilities, the general and special education personnel instructing them need to be of the highest possible quality. Accordingly, teacher preparation and professional development programs must continually be improved to ensure that teacher candidates and veteran teachers have access to up-to-date, research-based information on effective instructional and assessment strategies in order to provide high-quality services to all students. The proposed project will address this need by providing access to high-quality professional development focused on a common theme that will be delivered consistently across the state and by working with institutions of higher education (IHEs) to incorporate the professional development content into general and special education preservice curricula.

Finally, while the grade of B- in school climate is better than the 2003 Illinois grade of C, there remains room for further improvement. School climate involves such factors as parent involvement, engagement in learning, and school safety. The SPD Project will help improve parent involvement through the participation of parents at the local, regional, and state levels, as discussed later in this proposal. The systemic implementation of school-based problem solving that will result from the professional development provided through the project will serve to increase student engagement, in that student needs will be identified and addressed early to increase their academic and social/emotional success.

Student Performance

In Illinois students with IEPs participate in the state assessment in one of three primary ways:

- 1) Take the regular assessment without accommodations—
 - Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) for grades 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8, or
 - Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) for grade 11, and/or
 - Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) for the same grades.

(Note: In fall 2005, IMAGE will be replaced with Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs);

- 2) Take the regular assessment with accommodations; or
- 3) Take the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA).

For the ISAT, a fourth option exists, in that a student may take the ISAT for one subject area and the IAA for another subject area. Therefore, at a given grade level, the number of students with IEPs reported as taking ISAT will likely vary from subject to subject. Student performance falls into one of four levels: Academic Warning, Below Standards, Meets Standards, and Exceeds Standards.

In 2004, 98 percent of Illinois students with disabilities participated in statewide assessment, which is an increase of six percentage points over the 2003 participation rate of 92 percent. However, while participation rates have improved, a significant gap continues to exist between the performance of students with and without disabilities. As a group, students with disabilities are not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals in reading and mathematics. Data from the 2003-04 school year indicate that of the 886 school districts in Illinois, 335 did not make AYP. Of these 335, 199 or 59.4 percent did not meet AYP solely because they failed to meet

proficiency levels for the subgroup of students with disabilities.

The data in Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the performance gap in reading and math between students with disabilities and all students by showing the cumulative progress/slippage of the comparative groups. The data are taken from the 2003 and 2004 Illinois State Report Cards and show that the percentage of proficient scores of students with disabilities (SWD) consistently lags far behind that of the student population as a whole (All).

Table 1. Reading
2003 and 2004 ISAT/PSAE Performance Gaps:
Percentage of Students with Disabilities and All Students
Scoring Meets or Exceeds, by Grade Level

Grade	2003			2004		
	Students with Disabilities	All Students	Performance Gap Between SWD/All	Students with Disabilities	All Students	Performance Gap Between SWD/All
3	32.2	62.0	-29.8	35.6	65.0	-29.4
5	25.3	60.4	-35.1	24.9	60.9	-36.0
8	19.5	63.7	-44.2	24.2	67.1	-42.9
11	15.3	56.4	-41.1	16.1	56.8	-40.7

In 2003, the performance gap in reading between the “SWD” and “All” groups ranged from a low of 29.8 percentage points in grade 3 to a high of 44.2 percentage points in grade 8. In 2004, the gap between the groups ranged from a low of 29.4 percentage points in grade 3 to a high of 42.9 percentage points in grade 8. From 2003 to 2004, students in the “All” group demonstrated the following minor fluctuations in the percentage of students scoring proficient in reading:

2003

- Grade 3 – 62.0%
- Grade 5 – 60.4%
- Grade 8 – 63.7%

2004

- Grade 3 – 65.0%
- Grade 5 – 60.9%
- Grade 8 – 67.1%

The lowest percentage of students scoring proficient in reading performance for “All” was in grade 11 (56.4 percent in 2003; 56.8 percent in 2004). The percentage of proficiency for this group remained relatively static from grades 3 through 8 in both years, but decreased from grades 8 to 11 (by 11.6 percentage points in 2003 and 15.4 percentage points in 2004). The reading proficiency levels of the “SWD” group demonstrated a steady decrease from grades 3 through 11 in 2003 and 2004 (decreased by 52.5 percentage points and 54.8 percentage points, respectively). The gaps in reading performance discussed here highlight the importance of early intervening services in reading. Had many of these students received scientific, research-based reading instruction at early grade levels, it is likely that they would have made gains as they progressed into the upper grades, rather than experiencing a widening gap in their achievement.

**Table 2. Math
2003 and 2004 ISAT/PSAE Performance Gaps:
Percentage of Students with Disabilities and All Students
Scoring Meets or Exceeds, by Grade Level**

Grade	2003			2004		
	Students with Disabilities	All Students	Performance Gap Between SWD/All	Students with Disabilities	All Students	Performance Gap Between SWD/All
3	55.0	75.7	-20.7	59.7	79.2	-19.5
5	35.2	68.3	-33.1	39.0	71.8	-32.8
8	13.0	53.1	-40.1	13.9	54.4	-40.5
11	12.7	53.3	-40.6	12.1	53.1	-41.0

In 2003, the gap between the math performance levels of the “SWD” and “All” groups ranged from a low of 20.7 percentage points in grade 3 to a high of 40.6 percentage points in grade 11. In 2004, the gap between the groups ranged from a low of 19.5 percentage points in grade 3 to a high of 41.0 percentage points in grade 11.

Early elementary and intermediate math students in both groups consistently demonstrated a greater proficiency level than older students. The proficiency level of the “All” group decreased from grade 3 through grades 5 and 8 and was lowest at grade 11 (a 30 percentage point decrease from grade 3 through 11 in 2003; a 33 percentage point decrease for the same grade span in 2004). The proficiency level of the “SWD” group decreased even more dramatically from grade 3 through 11 (by 77 percentage points in 2003 and by 80 percentage points in 2004).

The preceding data demonstrates a significant need in Illinois to improve reading and math instruction for students with disabilities and other at-risk students. Students cannot perform well on state assessments if they do not develop the skills in the content area assessed. In order to develop those skills, students must have access to high-quality instruction. The proposed project will address this need by implementing a regional system of professional development designed to improve the knowledge and skills of general and special education personnel to provide research-based instruction and early intervention, with an emphasis on reading, to the diverse learners in their schools. In addition, the professional development will also equip teachers with the support, resources, knowledge, and skills to align classroom-level assessment and instruction with the *Illinois Learning Standards*.

Least Restrictive Environment

The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan (ICIP) for Special Education specifies the following goal: *Illinois will increase by 4.5 percentage points per year [from a baseline of 36.7*

percent in school year 1998-99], the number of students with disabilities (3-21) who are provided a free and appropriate public education in general education classrooms (80 percent + time) in the school they would attend if not disabled. An analysis of 2003-04 data for age 6 to 21 shows that across all disabilities, the 2003-04 Illinois rate of student placement outside the general education classroom less than 21 percent of the time was nearly 44 percent.

Approximately 26 percent of Illinois students were placed outside the general education classroom 21 percent to 60 percent of the day, and nearly 25 percent were placed outside the general education class greater than 60 percent of the day.

Table 3 provides a comparison of LRE data from 2001 through 2003. As illustrated, Illinois is making progress toward its ICIP goal for LRE, but at a slower rate than the established target. From 2001 to 2003, there was an increase of 4.25 percentage points in placements outside general education less than 21 percent, while the target rate of 4.5 percentage points per year would have equated to an increase of nine percentage points in that time period. When analyzed by disability category, the data show that significant numbers of students identified as having autism, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, and multiple disabilities are still educated outside the regular environment for a majority of their school day.

Table 3. Comparison of LRE Data, 2001-2003

Placement	2001 & 2002 Comparison			2002 & 2003 Comparison			2001 & 2003 Comparison		
	'01 %	'02 %	Change	'02 %	'03 %	Change	'01%	'03%	Change
Outside Gen. Ed. < 21%	39.33	41.82	+2.49	41.82	43.58	+1.76	39.33	43.58	+4.25
Outside Gen. Ed. 21-60%	28.01	27.04	-0.97	27.04	26.14	-0.90	28.01	26.14	-1.87
Outside Gen. Ed. > 60%	26.67	25.22	-1.45	25.22	24.47	-0.75	26.67	24.47	-2.20

LRE data have implications for students' access to the general curriculum. For children with disabilities, access is often associated with setting rather than with an alignment of instruction with the *Illinois Learning Standards*. While Illinois is making progress toward increasing the percentage of students with disabilities who are educated in the general education classroom the majority of their day, there continues to be a struggle with providing all students with access to the general curriculum and scientific, research-based instruction that is aligned with the *Illinois Learning Standards*. This highlights the need for preservice and inservice training for general and special education personnel that incorporates such content. The proposed project will help address that need by providing these personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills to support students with disabilities in accessing the general curriculum in the LRE.

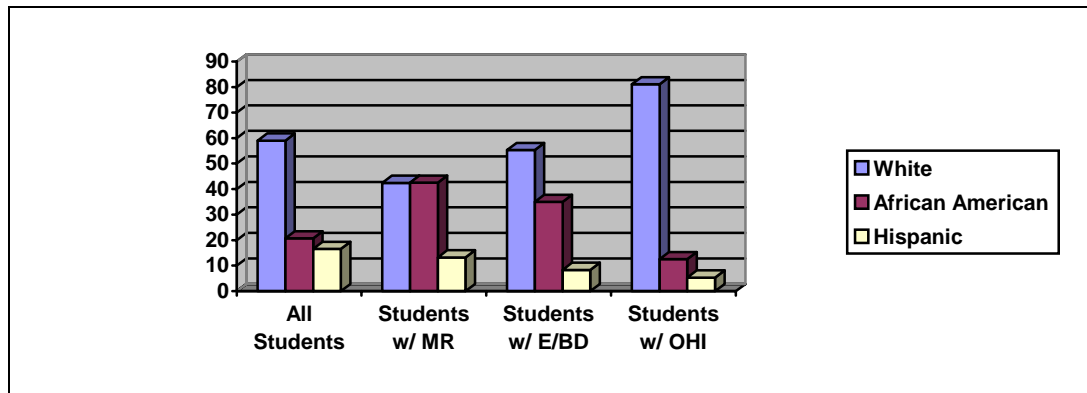
Incidence Rates and Disproportionality

In 2003-04, more than 283,000 of the 1.86 million Illinois children age 6 to 21 were identified as children with disabilities under IDEA, which represents approximately 15 percent of the total school population in this age group. Further, there has been an increase in the last two years in the identification of students with specific learning disabilities (SLD), other health impairments (OHI), and autism.

According to the Illinois December 2003 Child Count, the number of students age 6 to 21 identified as SLD increased to nearly 141,000 in 2003, compared with 137,000 in 2001. In its 2002 report, the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education cited evidence suggesting that 90 percent of children identified as SLD are so labeled because they have not been taught to read. Thus, an increasing number of students identified as SLD highlights the need for a greater emphasis on providing early intervening services focused on reading to prevent or reduce the likelihood of a reading disability.

When it comes to race/ethnicity, the President’s Commission Report (2002) states that, nationwide, children of minority status are twice as likely as white children to be identified as students with mental retardation (MR) or emotional disturbance/behavior disorders (E/BD). Illinois data reflect this trend, in that African American students make up nearly 21 percent of the total school population age 6 to 21, but represent more than 42 percent and 35 percent of the children identified in the categories of MR and E/BD, respectively (see Figure 1). Conversely, white students are considered underrepresented in the MR category, in that they make up approximately 59 percent of the total school population age 6 to 21, but only 42 percent of the MR category. In the OHI category, however, white students make up 81 percent of the population and are thus overrepresented, while African American students make up less than 13 percent of the OHI population and are underrepresented, as are Hispanic students at 5.3 percent (compared with 16.5 percent of all students age 6 to 21).

Figure 1. Student Percentages by Race/Ethnicity



As stated previously, identification rates for the categories of OHI and autism have increased. Specifically, from December 2002 to December 2003, the number of students identified as OHI increased by 20 percent (from 13,679 to 16,354) and the number of students with autism increased by 17 percent (from 5,215 to 6,116).

It is likely that the 20 percent increase in the number of students identified as OHI is

associated with an increasing number of children diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD). In Illinois, children with ADD/ADHD may be found eligible for special education and related services under the category of OHI. As reported in *Identifying and Treating Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder: A Resource for School and Home* (USDE, OSEP, 2003), Weiss and Hechtman (as cited in Johnston, 2002) and Ingersoll (1988) found that in comparison with their peers without ADHD, students with ADHD had persistent academic difficulties that resulted in lower average marks, more failed grades, more expulsions, increased dropout rates, and a lower rate of college undergraduate completion. Accordingly, children with ADD/ADHD are at risk for academic and/or social failure and can benefit from academic and behavioral interventions in the general education classroom.

The proposed project will assist in addressing disproportionality issues in Illinois. Traditionally, the only way that students could get direct assistance to address their learning or behavioral challenges was to identify them as eligible for special education, which often leads to overidentification of children in certain disability categories and of certain ethnicities. The project focuses on using a school-based, problem-solving/response to intervention model for early identification of the needs of students at risk of academic failure due to learning and/or behavioral difficulties; designing and providing early intervening services, with an emphasis on reading, to address those needs; and data collection to closely monitor student progress. It also focuses on aligning classroom-level assessment and instruction with the *Illinois Learning Standards*. Therefore, the project will support efforts to improve instruction and early identification and response to students' learning needs, thereby reducing the potential for inappropriate identification of students as special education-eligible.

Professional Development Needs

In April 2005 ISBE conducted a survey of school personnel and parents to assess their needs for professional development that would help schools better meet certain NCLB and *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004* (IDEIA) requirements, particularly those related to student performance. Respondents included general education teachers (33.6 percent), special education teachers (27.7 percent), related services personnel (5 percent), paraprofessionals (1.4 percent), general education administrators (5.3 percent), special education administrators (4.6 percent), directors of special education (6 percent), district superintendents (1.8 percent), parents (5.3 percent), and others (9.2 percent). They were asked to rate the eight professional development topics listed in Table 4 on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = low importance, 4 = high importance) in terms of their importance to improving schools' abilities to meet NCLB and IDEIA requirements. Table 4 also provides the percentage of all respondents who rated each topic as having medium (3) or high (4) importance.

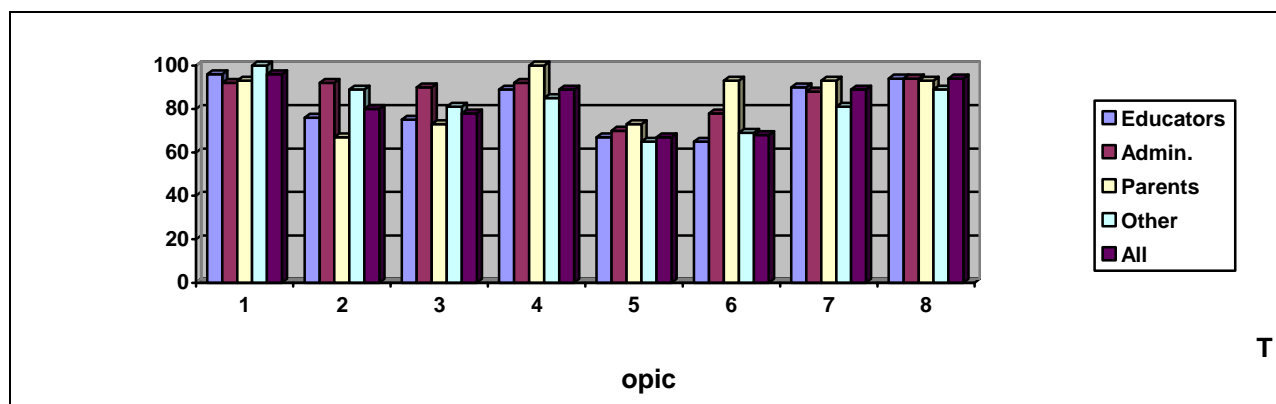
Table 4. Professional Development Needs Assessment Topics and Rating Results

Topic	% Rating Topic as Important
1. Designing and providing early intervening services to address the needs of students who are at-risk of academic failure due to learning and/or behavioral difficulties.	96
2. Scientific, research based reading instruction.	80
3. Scientific, research based math instruction.	78
4. Positive behavior interventions and supports.	89
5. Using response to scientific, research-based intervention as a way to monitor student progress and determine if a child has a disability.	67
6. Aligning instruction and assessment of students with disabilities with the <i>Illinois Learning Standards</i> .	68

7. Designing and providing accommodations, adaptations and modifications to facilitate students' access to the general curriculum.	89
8. Effective instructional strategies, e.g., differentiated instruction, for diverse learners.	94

For analysis, respondents were grouped into four broad categories: *Educators* (general and special education teachers, related service personnel, and paraprofessionals), *Administrators* (general and special education administrators, district superintendents, and directors of special education), *Parents*, and *Other*. As illustrated in Figure 2, topics 1, 4, 7, and 8 received a rating of medium or high importance from 89 percent (topic 4) to 96 percent (topic 1) of educators. Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 were rated as medium or high in importance by at least 90 percent of all administrators. More than 90 percent of parents rated topics 1, 4, 6, 7, and 8 as having medium or high importance. Across all respondents, 96 percent rated topic 1 as medium or high in importance, topic 8 received the same rating from 94 percent of respondents, and 89 percent rated topics 4 and 7 as medium or high in importance.

Figure 2. Percentage of Respondents Rating Each Topic of Medium or High Importance



These results illustrate the need for professional development focusing on such topics as early intervening services, positive behavior interventions and supports, providing access to the general curriculum, and aligning instruction and assessment with the *Illinois Learning*

Standards. Further, the similarity in ratings across general and special education personnel and administrators highlights the commonality of needs among these groups, which supports the SPD Project plan to train general and special educators together. In this regard, one respondent's comment is particularly relevant: *As a former special education administrator, I have always been frustrated at the separation between regular and special education. We need to work as one unified system if we are ever to overcome the problems inherent in our current educational system.* The SPD Project will clearly address the needs illustrated here through its focus on professional development involving teams of general and special educators and administrators and topics that match the priorities that emerged from the needs assessment.

Personnel Needs

According to the ISBE *Educator Supply and Demand in Illinois, Preliminary Annual Report, December 2004*:

- Total Illinois public school enrollment for school year 2004 increased by more than 25,000 students, or 1.3 percent over the previous year. This is nearly double the increase in 2003 and is moderately higher than the five-year trend where total enrollments increased just under 1.0 percent, or about 17,000 students per year. However, it is expected that K-12 enrollments will remain relatively constant for the next four years, increasing by only 2,000 students per year. In contrast, secondary enrollments are expected to increase substantially over the same time period. It is predicted that by the year 2008, secondary enrollments will increase by more than 30,000 students (5 percent) while elementary enrollments will decrease by nearly 24,000 students (-2 percent). Such a change will greatly affect the relative demand for secondary and elementary teachers.
- For the first time in 10 years, the total full-time teaching force declined. The total number

of full-time teachers employed in Illinois public schools in school year 2004 was 122,040, a decrease of nearly 9,000 teachers (or -6.7 percent) from last year. Downstate showed nearly a 2 percent decrease from last year, while Chicago showed an unprecedented 27 percent decrease in full-time teachers.

- The last survey of unfilled positions was completed as of October 1, 2003, where Illinois public schools reported a total of 1,409 unfilled positions, 216 fewer than reported the previous year. The areas with the greatest number of unfilled positions in the 2004 school year were self-contained elementary, speech/language pathology, library media, and Learning Behavior Specialist I (special education certificate that covers all disability categories except blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing, and speech/language).

Table 5 provides data on unfilled special education and related services personnel by regions (downstate and Chicago).

Table 5. Number of Unfilled Special Education and Related Services Positions, 2002-03

Position	Downstate	Chicago	State
Learning Behavior Specialist (LBS) I	106.2	217.0	323.2
Blind/Visually Impaired	2.0	2.0	4.0
Deaf/Hearing Impaired	3.0	2.0	5.0
Early Childhood Special Education	2.0	1.0	3.0
Speech/Language Pathologist	96.9		96.9
Occupational Therapist	7.3		7.3
Physical Therapist	2.0		2.0
Psychologist	23.7		23.7
Social Worker	1.0		1.0
Totals	244.1	222.0	466.1

Because of the preliminary nature of the December 2004 *Educator Supply and Demand in Illinois Report*, data were not available to accurately report trends in certain areas. Therefore, the following data are taken from the *Educator Supply and Demand in Illinois 2003 Annual Report*:

- Through 2007, it is estimated that Illinois will need almost 40,000 regular and more than 9,000 special education teachers. Historically, re-entries have filled just more than 40 percent of teacher vacancies each year, so Illinois schools will need to hire approximately 20,000 re-entries and 29,000 first-time teachers over the next four years. In that same time period, Illinois is expected to need about 3,300 administrators and 4,300 school service personnel and other certified staff.
- The number of teacher education program completers has increased by an average of 6 percent a year since 1999, with the biggest increase (14 percent) occurring in administrative programs (see Table 6). During this time period, all of the other program areas have increased moderately (4 percent to 8 percent), except for Early Childhood, which had a significant decrease in 2001.

Table 6. Number of Program Completers

	1999	2000	2001	2002	Average Change 2000-2002
Early Childhood	638	638	584	621	-1%
Elementary	3,953	3,715	4,243	4,453	4%
Secondary Programs	2,228	2,882	2,506	2,719	8%
K-12 Programs	854	788	948	1,065	8%
Special Education Programs	1,495	1,322	1,889	1,770	8%
School Service Personnel	528	677	508	555	4%
Administrative Programs	1,180	1,179	1,760	1,659	14%
Alternative Certification	0	0	66	1,092	—
Totals	10,876	11,201	12,504	13,934	6%

- In 2003, 12,012 first-time and re-entering teachers were hired, an increase of 20 percent (or 2,031) over 2002. The majority of newly hired teachers were at the elementary (5,437), or high school (2,940) level. When compared with 2002, these two positions also had the largest increase in the number of new hires (36 percent and 24 percent, respectively). However, special education and middle school new hires increased only 1 percent this year.
- In 2003 the areas with the lowest attrition rates were health, special education, physical education, and Title I reading/math
- Since 1996, administrator attrition rates have more than doubled, which is significantly higher than the rate of change for teachers. If this trend continues, attrition will be nearly 9 percent in school year 2003 and 10 percent the following year.

In terms of data specific to special education and related services personnel, Table 7 provides the number of Illinois school districts that had shortages in 2003, in comparison with 2002. As shown, in 2003 the number of school districts with special education personnel shortages decreased between 32 percent and 38 percent in each position category.

Table 7. Number of School Districts with Shortages in Special Education Personnel (2003)

Positions	# of Districts with Shortages	Change from 2002
Speech/Language Pathologist	301	(139 or 32%)
Special Ed–Behavior Disordered*	292	(177 or 38%)
Special Ed–Learning Disabled*	297	(157 or 36%)
Special Ed–Cross Categorical*	276	(169 or 38%)
Special Ed–EMH*	228	(137 or 38%)
Psychologist	211	(130 or 38%)

*now encompassed by the LBS I certificate

Illinois has 31 public and private IHEs that prepare special education teachers, related service personnel, and administrators. The tables in Appendix A provide a complete list of IHEs with approved programs, as well as data by IHE on the number of certificates issued to candidates completing approved programs at each IHE in 2003-04, and the number of candidates recommended for certification to date in 2004-05. Table 8 shows the overall total number of LBS I, speech/language pathologist (nonteaching and teaching), school psychologists, and school social worker certificates that ISBE issued in 2003-04 to candidates who completed an approved teacher education program that same year, while Table 9 shows the overall total number of candidates in these same categories that have been recommended for certification to date in 2004-05. As shown by these data, Illinois is making progress toward increasing the supply of qualified special education personnel.

Table 8. Certificates Issued in 2003-04 to Candidates Completing Approved Programs

Certificate Type	LBS I	S/LP Type 75 (non-teaching)	S/LP Type 10 (teaching)	School Psychologist	School Social Worker
Number Issued	485	182	63	107	469

Table 9. Candidates Recommended for Certification to Date in 2004-05

Certificate Type	LBS I	S/LP Type 75 (non-teaching)	S/LP Type 10 (teaching)	School Psychologist	School Social Worker
Number Recommended	722	121	24	66	122

In order to address personnel supply and demand in the state, ISBE will continue to partner with teacher preparation IHEs and LEAs. For example, ISBE currently partners with Eastern Illinois University to carry out the collaborative cohort model, which is so named because of the

collaboration that occurs between the university and LEAs, including special education joint agreements, that have a shortage of special education teachers. Efforts will be made to secure the agreement of other teacher preparation IHEs to adopt this model and reach out to LEAs in their areas, and the involvement of IHEs in the SPD Project will provide an avenue for soliciting expanded participation. The ISBE Certification Division will also continue its relationship with IHEs in reviewing and approving, in conjunction with the State Teacher Certification Board, general and special education personnel and administrator preparation programs. In addition, several teacher preparation IHEs in Illinois have submitted Personnel Preparation Grant proposals, and ISBE has agreed to partner with any of these IHEs awarded a grant. This partnership will ensure that the SPD Project activities are integrated, to the maximum extent possible, with activities of the IHE projects funded under section 662 of IDEA.

Other activities will be carried out under the Illinois Title II, Part A, application and plan, including development of a comprehensive teacher recruitment and retention plan, with consultation from school district administrators, Regional Offices of Education (ROEs), teacher unions, IHEs, the business community, and other critical stakeholders. As stated in the Illinois Consolidated State Application, “the plan will identify and prioritize all means of attracting individuals to the profession, particularly in teacher shortage areas (e.g., math, reading, science, special education, etc.) and in high need schools. The plan will likely target financial incentives such as scholarships, loans, or stipends; accelerated program delivery models (e.g., alternative routes to certification, high-quality professional development, etc.); pension incentives for retired teachers; and retraining existent professionals for service in high-need fields.” ISBE recognizes the need for high standards of quality from all educators if student achievement is to improve. The agency has developed a strong framework for educator quality through standards-based

professional preparation programs, enhanced certification tests, and recertification requirements. With state-level policies and activities that promote high-quality teachers in all classrooms and improved environments that promote and nurture student, teacher, and administrator learning, student achievement will improve over time.

B. Significance

1) Likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

The ICIP for Special Education guides the work of the ISBE Special Education Services Department. The five-year ICIP addresses five goals that center on school completion, educational environment, personnel, family involvement, and general supervision and monitoring (see Table 10).

Table 10. Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan Goals and Desired Outcomes

<p><u>Goal 1:</u> Illinois will increase by 4.5 percentage points, per year, the percentage of youth with disabilities who exit school with a standard diploma (reaching 90 percent in 2007) and increase employment and/or postsecondary education.</p>
<p><i>Desired Outcomes</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the percentage of students age 17 to 21 with disabilities who exit with a standard diploma. 2. Increase the percentage of students age 17 to 21 with disabilities who exit with a standard diploma and employment. 3. Increase the percentage of students age 17 to 21 with disabilities who exit with a standard diploma, complete an alternative education program or GED and go on to postsecondary education. 4. Decrease the drop-out rate of students (age 14 to 21) with disabilities.

5. Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who participate in statewide (ISAT, PSAE, and IMAGE) or alternate assessments (IAA).
6. Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who perform at the “meets standards” or “exceeds standards” levels, as measured by ISAT, PSAE, or IAA.
7. Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who are suspended.
8. Decrease the percentage of students (age 14 to 21) with disabilities who are expelled.

Goal 2: Illinois will increase by 4.5 percentage points, per year, the number of students with disabilities (3 to 21) who are provided free and appropriate public education in general education classrooms (80 percent+ time) in the school they would attend if not disabled.

Desired Outcomes

1. Increase the percentage of students with disabilities (age 6 to 21) who are served in general education with nondisabled peers 80 percent or more of the time, and decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who are served in general education with nondisabled peers less than 40 percent of the time.
2. Increase the percentage of children with disabilities (age 3 to 5) served in general settings with nondisabled peers 80 percent or more of the time, and decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who are in general settings with nondisabled peers less than 40 percent of the time.
3. Infants and toddlers served in Part C who are determined to have a need for Part B services receive them in a timely manner (in accordance with Illinois rules and regulations).

Goal 3: Illinois will increase by 1 percent per year, starting in 2003, the number of fully certified or licensed general and special education teachers, administrators, and related services personnel who are prepared to provide a free and appropriate public education in the LRE with individualized supplementary aids and services to students with disabilities

Desired Outcomes

1. Increase the percentage of fully certified general education teachers who are prepared to instruct students in the LRE.
2. Increase the percentage of fully certified special education teachers and related services personnel.

Goal 4: Illinois will increase the meaningful, effective involvement of families in the educational process of children with disabilities.

Desired Outcome

1. Parents are involved in determining appropriate services for their children and in program improvement activities.

Goal 5: Illinois will have a general supervision and monitoring system that improves student outcomes measured by: a) the percentage of monitored LEAs identified in the lower quartile on a goal measure, and b) annual progress of monitored LEAs on the critical indicators.

Desired Outcomes

1. LEAs (or Joint Agreements) that are identified in the lower 10 percent when measured against uniform benchmarks are monitored.
2. Monitored LEAs (or Joint Agreements) achieve required progress on the critical indicators for which they were cited.
3. Required procedural safeguards are ensured through the application of the 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Part 226, by the ISBE Special Education Compliance Division.
4. Increased opportunities exist for parent input into the monitoring process.
5. Eligible children and youth with disabilities in local detention facilities are afforded the same rights under IDEA as children and youth with disabilities served by public agencies, to the extent permitted under IDEA.

The SPD Project will support several, if not all, of these goals. Further, when the new State Performance Plan is developed to replace the ICIP, the SPD Project will be part of the activities to support that plan. In terms of the current ICIP, the focus of the SPD Project on improved student outcomes has implications for ICIP Goal 1, but it most directly supports Goals 2, 3, and 4. The project will target both general and special education personnel as participants in the professional development and technical assistance activities. When educators improve their knowledge and skills, they become more highly qualified (Goal 3). This, in turn, will help build the capacity of schools to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners in the general education classroom and thereby help schools improve their ability to educate students with disabilities in the LRE (Goal 2). Further, Goal 4 will be supported through the integral role that parents will play in the project—at the local level as participants in their children’s educational plans and in professional development, at the regional level as partners in the proposed Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs), and at the state level by serving on the SPD Project Advisory Committee.

In terms of Goal 5, Illinois is moving toward a new data-driven approach to continuous improvement monitoring, which merges compliance with a focus on outcomes. Under the Illinois General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG), ISBE has identified critical performance indicators (CPIs) that will be used to evaluate the performance of LEAs in providing effective educational services for students with disabilities. The CPIs include state assessment participation rates and performance, including gaps between students with disabilities and nondisabled students; LRE placement rates; graduation and drop out rates; and disproportionality. ISBE is also working with the National Center for Special Education Accountability and Monitoring (NCSEAM) to revamp its special education monitoring system.

In particular, NCSEAM is assisting in revising the policies and procedures, forms, and reporting formats; applying the CPIs to select school districts to be monitored; and peer monitoring training. It is proposed that when a school district is monitored, the following five areas will be examined in conjunction with the identification of compliance/noncompliance:

1. Infrastructure (e.g., funding, school culture)
2. Policies/Procedures (expectations)
3. Professional Development (formal training)
4. Daily Technical Assistance (support, resources, assistance, tools)
5. Sufficient Supervision (accountability)

These five areas will, in turn, be used as a framework by ISBE for organizing the corrective action requirements specified in a focused monitoring report and by school districts in developing their corrective action plans, with a particular emphasis on evidence of change. For those corrective actions that require professional development, there will be options available to school districts, including ISBE-funded initiatives.

To that end, the availability of regionalized professional development through the proposed SPD Project will be relevant to Goal 5 in that the training offered through the project will be a potential resource to carry out corrective actions ordered in those school districts cited for noncompliance. As discussed in the *Need for the Project* section, the focus of the professional development has the potential to have a direct impact on the quality of instruction and the provision of scientific, research-based early intervening services to students, all of which have implications for improving those areas identified as CPIs for focused monitoring.

Focus on Systemic Professional Development

The President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education found that, “Existing

continuing education efforts are often inadequate for a number of reasons, including lack of substantive and research-based content, the lack of systematic follow-up necessary for sustainability, and the ‘one-shot’ character of many workshop training programs. Special and general educators require continuous opportunities to improve their ability to provide effective instruction to each student.” (July 1, 2002, p. 60).

The first Illinois State Improvement Grant (SIG) had as one of its primary goals the establishment of a network of professional development that coordinates local, regional, and state resources with parents and educators. However, participating school district sites were allowed to identify from a menu of identified needs the type of professional development that would be offered locally to address those needs, which resulted in fragmentation of activities and outcomes. Further, because no proven model of practice was provided nor procedures for improving the educational outcomes for students with disabilities were specified as a part of systemwide planning, statewide evaluation comparing school- and student-level outcomes of the professional development activities has proven to be difficult, if not impossible. The systemic approach of the Illinois SPD Project is designed to address these and other challenging professional development issues.

The Illinois SPD Project focuses on the following major goal: *Establish and implement a coordinated, regionalized system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities, as measured by improved student progress and performance.*

A set of underlying assumptions will be used to provide a common framework for the activities directed toward achieving this goal:

- No one entity has the resources or expertise to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, birth to 21, and their families.
- Partnerships to accomplish particular goals, objectives, and outcomes through coordination, collaboration, and/or the sharing of resources and expertise, may occur within and across multiple layers (e.g., state, regional, and local), be formed in many ways, and consist of varying structures.
- Current Illinois initiatives that support various aspects of an integrated service delivery system for individuals with disabilities and their families provide the history, experience, and expertise needed to expand and build capacity, given an infrastructure and common vision upon which to build.

The Illinois SPD Project is designed around a framework built on the following themes:

- Collaborative activities that link partners who are interested in, and who have resources and interests to contribute to, the development of highly qualified personnel.
- Engaging parents as equal partners.
- Linking and integrating special and general education personnel development.
- Providing an infrastructure for focused personnel development efforts at local, regional, and state levels, in response to identified needs.
- Achieving significant unity regarding the purpose of personnel activities, focusing on improved results.

These themes will link local, regional, and state activities to the Illinois standards-based certification structure, to common evaluation and data collection, and to research and recommended practice in the education field.

The project structure will involve the establishment of four RPDCs in the state—Chicago,

north, central, and south. (See map in Appendix B.) The RPDCs will be a collaborative partnership of LEAs; regional providers, such as ROEs and Regional System of Support Providers (RESPROs); IHEs, and parent entities, such as the ISBE Parent Mentor Projects and the Parent Training and Information (PTI) Centers. All RPDCs will provide professional development using a standardized training curriculum focused on designing and providing early intervening services, with an emphasis on scientific, research-based reading instruction; progress monitoring; response to intervention; and standards-aligned instruction and assessment. In addition, school demonstration/data collection sites will be identified in selected school districts in each RPDC geographic area to enhance project replicability and to ensure that evaluation can be conducted at the student level. The RPDCs will provide technical assistance and consultation to these sites and will use a common framework for the technical assistance, further strengthening the systemic nature of the project. Further details of the project design are provided in the *Quality of Project Design* section.

The involvement of LEAs and regional providers will ensure that the project reaches both general and special education personnel, which will help bridge the gap that often exists between the two and facilitate a more unified system of professional development. The involvement of IHEs will facilitate IHE teacher preparation faculty having access to professional development resources, as well as incorporation of the professional development content of the project into general and special education preservice curricula, thus increasing the systemic impact of the project. The parent involvement that is integral to the project design is also critical to systems change in that the more informed and involved parents become, the greater the likelihood that they will advocate for and support continued implementation of quality practices to improve their children's education.

Building on Successful Initiatives and Systems

The SPD Project builds upon successful ISBE initiatives (Flexible Service Delivery and Standards-Aligned Classroom), as well as the System of Support established to work with low-performing schools under NCLB. Modeling proven initiatives/systems will enhance the likelihood of systemic change and improvement of the SPD Project.

Flexible Service Delivery (Flex): This is a pilot project that began in 1998 and uses Response to Intervention (RTI) as a means of monitoring student progress while providing early intervening services to students at risk of academic failure. The purpose of the Flex model is to provide all students with more flexible and responsive educational services using a comprehensive decision-making process. This system blends general education, special education, and other support personnel expertise, services, and resources into one system that more effectively meets student needs. While the primary target population is students who are at risk of academic failure due to learning and/or behavioral difficulties and whose classroom performance is below expected levels, it is the premise of the Flex model that all learners can benefit from a more flexible intervention system.

The long-term goal of the Flex model is the improvement of learning of all students by maximizing the use of a building's resources and services. Through the use of a systematic problem-solving process and the implementation of strategies such as collaborative teaching, peer support systems, etc., school staff will be better able to provide differentiated instruction for all students. In addition to assisting staff members in their work with individual students, the Flex model supports a school's efforts to improve all student learning outcomes.

With funding from ISBE, the school districts participating in Flex have developed high-quality, research-based professional development cycles (see the *Quality of Project Design*

section) that will be used in the SPD Project as the primary training curriculum in the area of RTI and early intervening services. By using a standardized curriculum and common professional development structure, the consistency of training will be improved, as will the systemic implementation of the knowledge and skills gained by the participants. In addition, use of the Flex training cycles will support “Use of Funds,” paragraph (a), of the grant application requirements because the content is designed to “improve the knowledge of special education and regular education teachers and principals, and in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, concerning effective instructional practices.” Specifically, the Flex training cycles will provide training in methods of scientifically based reading instruction, including early literacy instruction; early and appropriate interventions to identify and help children with disabilities; and using classroom-based techniques to assist children before referral for special education.

Standards-Aligned Classroom (SAC): One of the stated ISBE goals is to assist educators in applying the principles and practices of a “Standards-Led” Educational System to improve teaching and learning. Many districts and schools have begun aligning their school- and district-level curricula with the *Illinois Learning Standards*. However, one may not assume that because a curriculum topic is aligned with standards at a school or district level that classroom-level lessons and assessments on that topic are also aligned with the standards.

SAC is a highly effective, cost-efficient professional development initiative involving teachers and administrators, the immediate goal of which is to equip teachers with the support, resources, knowledge, and skills to align classroom-level assessment and instruction with the *Illinois Learning Standards*. Given that research shows that the quality of instruction has an impact on student achievement, the ultimate goal of the initiative is to improve student achievement to the extent it is measured by local and state assessments that are aligned with the

Illinois Learning Standards.

The program is designed to increase teacher knowledge and skills in the areas of standards, assessment, and instructional strategies by engaging them in professional Learning Teams made up of teachers and administrators, that meet in the school for the entire school year. Experienced statewide trainers provide the initial training for the teams and trained coaches provided by the ROEs and Intermediate Service Centers provide ongoing support to the teams during the school year.

The content of the SAC training curriculum goes hand-in-hand with designing interventions for at-risk students in that such interventions must be standards-based to facilitate implementation in the general education curriculum. Therefore, the SAC curriculum will be incorporated into the professional development provided through the SPD Project. Further, the expertise of the SAC statewide trainers and coaches will be tapped as the project seeks to expand upon and enhance the resources of SAC. In fact, ISBE is already moving forward with plans to adapt SAC training, coaching, and some resources to help special education teachers become an integral part of the program. The existing SAC network intends to fund and support 20 learning teams that have at least one special education teacher on the team. This will bring a more open discussion among special education teachers and their regular education colleagues about the needs of all students. This will also help special education teachers gain a deeper insight into the academic levels of the *Illinois Learning Standards* for all students.

Use of the SAC training curriculum will support “Use of Funds,” paragraph (b), of the grant application requirements, in that its focus will help ensure that teachers are able to “use challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement and functional standards, and state assessments for all children with disabilities, to improve instructional

practices and improve academic achievement of children with disabilities.”

System of Support: As part of its system for academic accountability, ISBE may place schools that are in academic difficulty in Academic Early Warning (AEW) or Academic Watch status (AW) based on the performance of their students on state assessments. In addition, schools that use Title I funding are subject to specific federal requirements related to school improvement under NCLB, with schools that fail to achieve standards being required to offer choice options for students and supplemental educational services.

With the passage of NCLB, schools face new achievement hurdles in reading and mathematics. All students and all subgroups of students are expected to meet or exceed state standards by 2014. NCLB requires states to set ever-increasing achievement targets starting in 2003 to move schools toward that goal. Since state AEW and AW list criteria must be merged with federal school improvement criteria, placement in AEW and AW status is projected to increase in the next few years.

State and federal laws also require that technical assistance or a system of support be established to help these schools improve academic performance. ISBE offers a regionalized system of support to assist schools in academic difficulty. Regional support systems provide improvement support to schools in AEW and AW status, as well as to assist other schools whose performance makes placement on the lists in the near future likely. It is expected that regional service providers (the RESPROs) will serve *all* schools and districts identified for support in the regions in which they are providing services.

The following two principles guide and permeate the enhanced System of Support services offered by the RESPROs in conjunction with ISBE:

- Student, school, and district performance can improve with a systemic and sustainable

approach.

- All improvement is local.

The system of support approach includes the following components:

- A central focus on the School Improvement Plan.
- Regionalized oversight and school assistance linked to compliance monitoring.
- Use of proven approaches and standardized processes for specific improvement components.
- Customization for regional and local differences among schools and districts.
- Coordination and leverage across programs, services, and funding.
- Proactive and preventative actions designed to head off academic difficulty.
- Efficient and effective deployment of state, regional, and local staff and resources.

The regionalized structure of the RESPROs provides a model of technical assistance outreach that will be modified for the SPD Project. Further, the RESPROs will have the opportunity to partner with the RPDCs either as a co-applicant for a subgrant or as an informal partner in resource sharing, which will further enhance the systemic approach of the project.

Beyond the initiatives and system previously discussed, the SPD Project will also be coordinated with activities supported through IDEA, Part B, funds retained at the state level for personnel and professional development purposes, thereby increasing the systemic impact of the project. ISBE funds five major projects that provide professional development and technical assistance statewide to educators and parents aimed at improving results for children with disabilities and school systems overall. These projects are: Project CHOICES (funded with both IDEA, Part B, discretionary and preschool discretionary dollars); the Illinois Autism and Training and Technical Assistance Project; the EBD/PBIS Initiative; the Parent Mentor Project,

which includes a statewide parent technical assistance center; and STARNET (funded from IDEA, Part B, preschool discretionary). In state FY06, the first four projects will be consolidated under the umbrella of a Statewide Technical Assistance Project/Center. Brief descriptions of the five projects follow.

Project CHOICES: Project CHOICES is a grant-funded LRE initiative of ISBE. There are two project components: 1) CHOICES, which supports school-age children; and 2) Early CHOICES, which supports preschool-age children. The purpose of Project CHOICES is to increase the capacities of school districts and educational personnel to educate and provide supports and services to children and youth with disabilities in the preschool, school, and community environments in which they would participate if not identified as having a disability. The project offers onsite consultation and technical assistance to those school districts that are interested in entering into a collaborative agreement and sponsors or conducts workshops and conferences.

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders/Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

(EBD/PBIS) Initiative: This initiative provides training and technical assistance to help schools and communities address the needs of students with EBD and other at-risk students. The PBIS component provides a proactive systems approach for creating and maintaining safe and effective learning environments in schools. PBIS focuses on data-based decision-making around discipline and academics at school, district, regional, and state levels, integrating related school improvement initiatives and structures such as 21st Century, Reading First, NCLB, and Safe Schools, and building skills and therefore capacity of school-based leadership teams through coaching and technical assistance. The goals of PBIS are to:

- Increase consistent use of positive teaching and reinforcement strategies among all school staff at schoolwide, classroom, and individual student levels.

- Reduce use of reactive discipline measures in schools (i.e., office discipline referrals, detentions, suspensions, and expulsions) for all students.
- Increase data-based decision-making about behavior and academic instruction and reinforcement across all school settings.
- Implement effective comprehensive supports/services/interventions for students with the most intensive behavioral/emotional needs through wraparound plans that address home, school, and community settings.

Illinois Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project: This is a statewide grant-funded ISBE initiative that provides training and technical assistance focused on educating students with autism and other pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) in the LRE. Its primary goals are to:

- Build local capacity to establish and implement effective educational supports and services in the least restrictive environment for children and youth with autism/PDD.
- Promote a proactive approach to working with individuals with autistic/PDD and their families.
- Help children and youth with autism/PDD remain with their families in their home communities and become productive community members.

Services include consultation, technical assistance, networking, parent education and support, regional training, community connections, and team training.

Parent Mentor Project and Statewide Parent Technical Assistance Center: The Parent Mentor Project is a newly funded ISBE initiative, and its purpose is to help parents of children with disabilities to effectively navigate the educational system in partnership with school district personnel. Parent mentors are experienced parents of children with disabilities who work at least half-time to provide training, information, technical assistance, and support. Parent mentors

serve as liaisons between families and education personnel to foster positive, collaborative teamwork.

The Parent Technical Assistance Center is also newly established and coordinates a system that facilitates parent access to training, information, advocacy, and leadership, including coordination of the Parent Mentor Project. The Center also provides support to parents of students with disabilities, other existing parent organizations, and education professionals. A technical assistance component provides research-based training on effective practices that improve results for children with disabilities. The technical assistance component will also strengthen partnerships among parents, school personnel, and education officials at the local and state levels.

The Center advances the ISBE priority to improve the delivery of training and technical assistance to parents of students with disabilities to enhance their ability to actively participate in their children's education. Such participation will help to ensure that students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education in the LRE. In order to further improve parent involvement, parents and educators must be equal partners in this process.

STARNET: STARNET is an ISBE grant-funded project and provides training, consultation, and resources on a regional basis to the early childhood community in Illinois. It supports family-centered, researched, and effective practices in early childhood education and care. The project also provides a variety of opportunities for personal and professional growth for those who touch the lives of young children age birth through 8, with an emphasis on children with special needs. As a statewide system, STARNET assists ISBE in meeting local needs by providing services in six regions throughout Illinois.

Requiring the four RPDCs to collaborate with these five projects will result in a more

comprehensive, coordinated system of professional development and technical assistance. It will also provide for sharing resources and expertise across projects, thereby increasing the statewide reach of the RPDCs.

Focus on Reading

As cited previously, according to the report of the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2002), evidence suggests that 90 percent of children identified as having specific learning disabilities are so identified because they have not been taught to read. In addition, Shaywitz, et al. (1992) and Francis, et al. (1996) found that approximately 75 percent of students identified as having reading difficulties in grade 3 still have reading disabilities in grade 9.

Given the wide body of research on reading and its impact on student performance, it is incumbent upon states to carry out systemic efforts to improve reading instruction in schools. In Illinois, the Reading First program targets high-poverty, low-performing schools that house at least kindergarten through grade 3 and are committed to carrying out activities that will result in classrooms with the following characteristics:

- Implementation of a high-quality reading program based on scientifically based reading research that includes instructional content based on the five essential components of reading—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Ongoing use of assessments and progress-monitoring strategies that inform instructional decisions, including placement and movement in large and small group instruction as appropriate to meet students' needs.
- Clear expectations for students' reading achievement and active engagement in a variety of reading-based activities that are connected to the essential components of reading and to clearly articulated academic goals.

- Coherent instructional design that includes explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities, aligned student materials, and a protected block of at least 90 minutes a day for reading instruction.
- Scientifically based intervention strategies designed for students not making sufficient progress to bring them to grade level.

Through Reading First, 42 Illinois school districts and 270 schools currently receive funding to conduct activities. Each school has one full-time reading coach. Further, one Reading First coordinator and one Early Reading Specialist are employed in each of nine regions in the state to facilitate Reading First activities in their areas.

Although Reading First targets improvement in the foundations of reading instruction, complementary activities are needed to provide reading improvement strategies that will have a direct impact on at-risk students, including those with disabilities. Therefore, the SPD Project will build upon the characteristics of Reading First classrooms through its emphasis on scientific, research-based reading instruction and improvement strategies that meet the requirements of Reading First. The use of SPD funds will ensure access to training for special and general education teachers in non-Reading First schools and promote high-quality reading instruction for children with disabilities and other at-risk learners on a statewide basis.

C. Quality of Project Design

1. Clearly specified and measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved.

Overall, the project goal and objectives will be accomplished through ISBE coordination and oversight; subgrant and contractual activities; collaboration at the state, regional, and local levels; and assistance provided by the SPD Project Advisory Committee. The project goal addresses qualitative issues regarding education personnel by supporting professional

development activities that not only respond to personnel development needs in the state, but are also based on IDEIA and NCLB. The goal will be achieved primarily through the four proposed RPDCs and is designed to help build a long-lasting infrastructure for professional development by requiring partnerships at many levels and by focusing on common professional development content across the state.

Table 11. Goal, Objectives, Activities, Responsible Parties

<p><u>Goal:</u> Establish and implement a coordinated, regionalized system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities, as measured by improved student progress and performance.</p>		
<p><i>Objective 1: To deliver research-based professional development and technical assistance, based on an established training framework developed by Flex and SAC, through development of regional plans that follow a common format and criteria established at the state level and are prepared in a partnership of LEAs, IHEs, regional providers, and parents.</i></p>		
Activity	Responsible Party	Deliverables/Evidence of Completion and Timelines
<p>1.1. Establish and implement RPDCs via a competitive RFP.</p>	<p>Project Director, SPD Project Advisory Committee</p>	<p>RFP issued; 10/05 Subgrants awarded; 1/06</p>
<p>1.2. Establish and convene quarterly an SPD Project Advisory Committee to review and provide input on project activities to make continual project improvements</p>		<p>Letter of invitation sent; 5/05 Committee established; 7/05 First meeting held; 10/05 Quarterly meetings through end of project</p>

Activity	Responsible Party	Deliverables/Evidence of Completion and Timelines
based on evaluation data.		
<p>1.3. Provide professional development through RPDCs for participants to gain knowledge and skills in RTI, scientific, research-based early intervening services with emphasis on reading, and standards-aligned instruction and assessment.</p>	<p>Project Coordinator, SPD Project Advisory Committee, RPDCs</p>	<p>Training curriculum and materials developed; 4/06 with periodic updates/revisions Training sessions scheduled, delivered and evaluated; begin 5/06 through project end</p>
<p>1.4. Using predetermined criteria, recruit and select demonstration/ data collection sites (three RDPCs: at least two schools in each of 6-10 districts per region; Chicago RPDC: at least 25 school buildings).</p>	<p>Project Coordinator, RPDCs</p>	<p>Signed agreements with sites; 4/06 and annually thereafter</p>
<p>1.5. Recruit LEA personnel in demonstration sites to serve as coaches for school personnel in day-to-day implementation of the RTI framework, reading instruction, and standards-aligned classroom concepts.</p>	<p>RPDCs, demonstration site administrators</p>	<p>Recruitment materials disseminated; 4/06 and then annually as needed thereafter</p>

Activity	Responsible Party	Deliverables/Evidence of Completion and Timelines
1.6. Use a “trainer-of-trainers” model to deliver professional development to LEA coaches.	RPDCs	Trainer-of-trainers curriculum developed 4/06 Training delivered 5/06, then as needed through project end
1.7. Provide technical assistance to RPDC sites through onsite visits, telephone consultation, and facilitation of cross-site meetings.	RPDCs, coaches	Onsite visits, telephone consultations, cross-site meetings; 5/06 through project end

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge and skills of personnel and parents, as measured by evaluation forms completed at the conclusion of training and follow-up observations.
- Improved school performance, as measured by student performance, retention rates, suspension/ expulsion, etc.
- Improved student performance, as measured by state assessment scores (especially reading), etc.
- An increase in the number of educators and parents with current information and up-to-date knowledge and skills regarding improving results for individuals with disabilities.

Objective 2: Increase the participation of parents in decision-making across district sites.

Activity	Responsible Party	Deliverables/Evidence of Completion and Timelines
2.1 Include the Parent Mentor Projects, Statewide Parent T.A. Center and/or PTIs, as active participants in the RPDC partnerships.	Project Director, Statewide Parent Consultant, RPDCs	RPDC applications clearly specify parent entities as co-applicants and/or as partners; 1/06
2.2 Provide a subgrant to one or	Project Director, Statewide	Subgrant(s) issued by 1/06

Activity	Responsible Party	Deliverables/Evidence of Completion and Timelines
more of the Illinois PTIs for development and dissemination of parent handbooks on RTI; early intervening services; scientific, research-based reading instruction; and other topics identified through the project.	Parent Consultant, PTI	Series of handbooks produced and disseminated; 10/06 and annually thereafter
2.3 Require demonstration sites to include parents in meetings with RPDCs to provide input on the effectiveness of school-level implementation.	RPDCs, demonstration site administrators	Parent names submitted by site administrators; 5/06 and then annually as new sites are added Meetings held and minutes reflect parent participation; 5/06 and then ongoing through end of project
2.4 Actively recruit parents of students in the demonstration sites to participate in training sessions.	RPDC partners, including LEAs and parent entities; demonstration site administrators	Parent recruitment materials produced and disseminated; spring 2006 and ongoing throughout the project
2.5 Facilitate active participation by parents in problem-solving and/or IEP meetings.	Demonstration sites, parents	Documented parent participation and completed parent surveys; semiannually each year
<p>Anticipated Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased communication between parents and RPDCs, as measured by RPDC logs. • Increased opportunity for parent input into regional professional development, as measured by the content of professional development for parents. • Improved parent awareness of training components and increased involvement in students' educational progress and achievement, as measured by parent surveys. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased parental participation in meetings for individual students, as measured by a sampling of problem-solving meeting notes and IEPs at the building level. 		
<p><i>Objective 3: Incorporate professional development content into IHE general and special education preservice curricula.</i></p>		
Activity	Responsible Party	Deliverables/Evidence of Completion and Timelines
3.1 IHEs participate in the RPDC partnerships.	IHE partner representatives	RPDC applications clearly specify IHEs as primary or co-applicants and partners; 1/06
3.2 Provide overview training sessions for IHE constituents.	RPDCs	Training overview content developed and delivered; summer 2006 and then annually
3.3 Offer IHE faculty the opportunity to participate in professional development activities.	RPDCs	Registration materials developed and sent; two months before each event
3.4 Provide technical assistance via workgroups, e-mail, and telephone for IHE faculty to incorporate training into existing preservice programs.	RPDCs, through IHE partners	Workgroups established and conducted; fall 2006 Workgroups conducted; spring 2007, then annually thereafter
<p>Anticipated Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge and skills of IHE personnel, as measured by evaluation forms completed at the conclusion of training. Increased preservice training on knowledge and skills required to design and implement early intervening services, including scientific, research-based reading instruction, for students with disabilities and other at-risk students, as measured by preservice curricula content. 		
<p><i>Objective 4: Evaluate the effectiveness of project activities.</i></p>		
Activity	Responsible Party	Deliverables/Evidence of Completion and Timelines
4.1 Select an external project	Project Director	RFP issued 10/05

Activity	Responsible Party	Deliverables/Evidence of Completion and Timelines
evaluator via competitive RFP.		Contract awarded 1/06
4.2 Design and implement a structure of data collection at the regional centers, incorporating and building on existing ISBE data collection systems.	Project Director, State Evaluator, RPDCs	Data collection structure in place and operable; 4/06
4.3 Establish and implement a data transfer method from regional centers to state evaluator.	State Evaluator, RPDCs	Data transfer structure in place and operable; 4/06
4.4 Provide quarterly data analysis and progress reports to the SPD Project Advisory Committee to inform and make continual improvements in project activities.	State Evaluator	Data Analysis and Progress Reports and meetings with SPD Project Advisory Committee; quarterly throughout project
4.5 Produce and present to ISBE an annual report of program effectiveness based on regional data.	State Evaluator, RPDCs	Annual Report; end of each grant year
4.6 Complete and submit the annual project report to OSEP.	Project Director, State Evaluator	OSEP Annual Report; end of each grant year
<p>Anticipated Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative data and information are available and used to evaluate progress of project activities, including professional development and knowledge and skills application, and to continually improve project implementation. • Accurate student-, school-, and district-level data are available and used to measure progress. • Summative data provide accurate information on project effectiveness. 		

2. *Project design is appropriate to/will address target population or other identified needs.*

The ultimate target population of the Illinois SPD Project is students with disabilities and other at-risk students who will benefit from having highly qualified personnel prepared to work toward ensuring student success in the general education curriculum. The immediate targets of the grant activities are the personnel themselves and parents.

Locating the RPDCs in four different geographic regions of the state will provide personnel in those regions access to professional development that will increase their knowledge and skills in working as a team to design and implement early intervening services, including scientific, research-based reading instruction, that are aligned with the standards-based general education curriculum and to use the RTI process to monitor student progress. It will also provide parents with opportunities to learn about such concepts as RTI, effective reading strategies, the importance of standards-aligned instruction, and what they can do to enhance their children's learning by working as partners with school personnel. Overall, this will strengthen the capacity of school systems to address the diverse learning needs of students at the local level.

The involvement of teacher preparation IHEs as partners will help address the needs of teacher and related services personnel candidates and IHE faculty. Through IHE involvement, work will be carried out to incorporate the content of the professional development into preservice curricula. In addition, IHE faculty and, to the extent feasible, teacher and related services personnel candidates, will have the opportunity to participate in the professional development activities provided by the RPDCs.

The needs of students with disabilities and other at-risk students will be addressed when school personnel and parents apply the knowledge and skills they learn through their participation in the project's systemic professional development. In the demonstration/data collection

sites, technical assistance from the RPDCs and local coaches will further enhance the application of the acquired knowledge and skills. As a result, it is anticipated that instruction will be improved and, in turn, student performance will increase. Data will be collected at the demonstration sites to measure student progress, which will take the project evaluation to the student level.

Demonstration/data collection site selection criteria will be established by ISBE, in conjunction with the SPD Project Advisory Committee, and are expected to include, but not be limited to:

- Student performance on state assessments, with particular emphasis on reading
- AYP status for the general population and subgroups
- Free and reduced lunch count
- Suspension/expulsion rates
- Disproportionality
- LRE data
- Special Education General Supervision and Monitoring report results

Use of criteria such as those listed here will ensure that more intense project services will be provided to schools with the greatest need in each RPDC geographic area. This will also help to ensure that economically disadvantaged and minority children are not taught at higher rates by teachers who are not highly qualified. It is proposed that new sites be added each year of the project, which will expand the impact of the project.

3. Proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of training in the field.

The primary purpose of the Illinois SPD Project is to effect a significant, systemic change in how Illinois manages its special education personnel development system, resulting in an infrastructure that will last beyond the grant period. The goal, objectives, and activities are linked through overarching themes of recommended practice in general and special education

and personnel development, and through themes of partnership and collaboration. Criteria grounded in these themes guide the major activities.

All of the primary activities are designed to extend well beyond the “one-time” workshop approach and to greatly expand the benefits to be derived from sustained, long-term professional development opportunities. The regionalized structure of the proposed project will serve to strengthen its coherence and sustainability.

As discussed previously, four RPDCs will be established—Chicago, north, central, and south—and will be a collaborative partnership of LEAs, regional providers, IHEs, and parent entities. (See map in Appendix B.) Figure 3 provides a schematic of the project structure. Because ISBE is required to competitively bid projects of this magnitude, the centers will be established by issuing subgrants through a competitive RFP process. Those eligible to serve as an administrative agent for each subgrant will include IHEs; LEAs, including special education joint agreements; and ROEs or RESPROs.

Figure 3. SPD Project Organization

The RPDCs will be responsible for:

- Delivery of regional professional development in the following priority areas:
 - Response to intervention and early intervening services using Flex training.

- Scientific, research-based reading instruction.
- Standards-aligned instruction and assessment, using the SAC curriculum.
- Jointly developing and maintaining a project website, which will be required to meet a government- or industry-recognized standard for accessibility.
- Working to incorporate this professional development content into IHE general and special education preservice curricula.
- Working with the PTIs to develop parent “handbooks” on these topics.
- Working with ISBE to identify district and school demonstration/data collection sites in each region.
- Working directly with the district and school demonstration/data collection sites to:
 - Provide training,
 - Provide technical assistance, including recruitment and training of LEA coaches,
 - Coordinate small group meetings of staff across sites for reflection and networking, and
 - Carry out district-, school-, and student-level evaluation activities.
- Conducting data collection for evaluation.
- Networking regularly across regional centers.
- Collaborating with other ISBE training and technical assistance initiatives.

Because all centers will use a common framework for technical assistance to the demonstration and data collection sites and a standardized training curriculum for professional development, the consistency of the project will be greatly enhanced. Focusing the professional development and technical assistance on a common theme will also increase the coherence and sustainability of the project and enhance the ability to evaluate project effectiveness. Further, each RPDC will be required to obtain ISBE approval as a provider of continuing professional

development. Therefore, the project will provide an additional resource to teachers and administrators in meeting certificate renewal requirements since individuals trained through these activities will receive Continuing Professional Development Units toward renewal of their certificates and endorsements, as required in Illinois.

The use of existing, proven professional development curricula and materials such as Flex and SAC training will further strengthen the integrity of the project, as well as its sustainability, since these materials were developed through ISBE projects and can be widely reproduced and shared. Details of the content of each of these curricula follow.

Flex Training Cycles: The Flex Training Cycles are progressive in that the content of each cycle builds upon information and skills learned in the previous cycle. Table 12 provides details of the content of each cycle. Schools will be at different stages in completing the cycles each project year. Therefore, each year some schools will begin with Cycle I training, while others with more experience may begin with Cycles II or III. It is possible for a school to complete all three cycles in one year.

Table 12. Flex Training Cycles

Cycle	Content
<i>Cycle I: Introductory Professional Development</i>	Introductory activities provide the background knowledge for participants to become novice members of a collaborative problem solving team and allow for supported practice of the process by participants. Topics include rationale for and history of a school-based, problem-solving (SBPS)/Flex model, the role of varied assessment procedures basic problem solving process, use of a multilevel problem-solving process, collaboration/effective team

	meetings, problem-solving forms and procedures, role of special education resources, and onsite school consultation.
<i>Cycle II: Tools for Implementing SBPS/FLEX.</i>	Activities provide participants with the tools to effectively implement a problem-solving process, primarily through the application of progress monitoring and the use of alternative assessment strategies. Such tools include defining and analyzing student concerns, progress monitoring, problem definition, measurement, graphing/charting, standards/discrepancy, progress monitoring plans, decision-making rules, environmental assessment, observation strategies, curriculum-based measurement (reading, math, spelling, written expression), phonemic awareness/early literacy (e.g., DIBELS), curriculum-based evaluation, task-related behavior, onsite consultation to teams, and team process.
<i>Cycle III: Intervention Approaches and Strategies</i>	Activities provide knowledge about a wide variety of intervention tools to address academic and social/behavioral needs. Intervention approaches and strategy topics include <i>task-related behavior</i> , e.g., environmental changes for school and student, topical knowledge/vocabulary; <i>social skills training/classroom management</i> ; <i>reading intervention</i> , e.g., fluency, comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary; <i>writing intervention</i> , e.g., writing process strategies, fluency, prerequisite skill-building, sentence combining, University of Kansas writing strategies; <i>math intervention</i> , e.g., computation strategies, fact accuracy and fluency,

	problem solving, content tools; <i>schoolwide strategies and interventions</i> ; and <i>homework strategies</i> .
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SAC Training: The SAC initiative is designed to increase teachers’ knowledge and skills in the areas of standards, assessment, and instructional strategies by engaging them in professional Learning Teams of teachers and administrators that meet in the school for the entire school year. Experienced statewide trainers provide the initial training for the teams and trained coaches provided by the ROEs and Intermediate Service Centers provide ongoing support to the teams during the school year. Table 13 outlines the SAC professional development process components.

Table 13. Steps in the SAC Process

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deconstructing (or unpacking) broadly stated learning standards, benchmarks, and performance descriptors to classroom-level learning targets that are clear and understandable to teachers and students. • Aligning assessments to the identified targets. • Creating aligned lesson plans or unit plans for instruction. • Evaluating student products for sufficiency and mastery of learning targets. • Engaging in ongoing job-embedded professional development on assessment, alignment, and instruction through learning teams. • Posting aligned lesson plans and assessments that have been reviewed for alignment and quality on a website accessible to all teachers. |
|---|

The use of a trainer-of-trainers model for LEA personnel to serve as coaches to their schools that serve as demonstration sites (see Objective 1.6) will also greatly increase project sustainability. Both the Flex and SAC initiatives emphasize the importance of onsite consultation. Under the Flex initiative, employees of a school district or special education joint

agreement have been trained and serve as coaches at the school level, while the SAC initiative has typically relied on external coaches provided by ROEs and Intermediate Service Centers. However, relying solely on external coaches creates the potential for the initiative to stop when the grant ends and the external coaches are no longer available. Training local personnel as coaches will help sustain the initiative beyond the end of the project.

Professional development participants will be required to attend the training in district or school teams, with a preference given to principal-led teams. Because building principals are critical to carrying out system change within a school, their involvement is key to the sustainability of the project. Under the current Illinois SIG, one of the Professional Development Academy subgrants (Northern Suburban Special Education District) has successfully implemented the model of principal-led teams in delivering professional development on school-based problem solving, and this success will be built upon. In fact, the schools selected as demonstration/data collection sites will be required to form such a team in order to receive the free technical assistance services from the RPDCs.

4. Proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

The professional development to be provided through the SPD Project is based on research and effective practice. The Flex training cycles were developed over a multiyear period and are based on current research and practice in such areas as school-based problem solving, reading instruction, progress monitoring, and RTI. Because each cycle builds on the previous one, the training is progressive and thereby supports a sequential building of skills and facilitates more in-depth learning than a typical one-shot workshop. The content is drawn from the work of such experts as David Tilly and Jeff Grimes of the Heartland Education Association in Iowa, Mark Shinn of National-Louis University and formerly of the University of Oregon, Dan Reschly of

Vanderbilt University and the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD), and David Prasse of Loyola University. For example, the SPD Project will use the “Core Concepts of RTI” (NRCLD, 2005), which include:

- Students receive high-quality instruction in their general education setting.
- General education instruction is research based.
- General education instructors and staff assume an active role in students’ assessment in that curriculum.
- School staff conduct universal screening of academics and behavior.
- Continuous progress monitoring of student performance occurs and pinpoints students’ specific difficulties.
- School staff implement specific, research-based interventions to address the student’s difficulties.
- School staff use progress-monitoring data to determine interventions’ effectiveness and to make any modifications, as needed.
- Systematic assessment is completed of the fidelity or integrity with which instruction and interventions are implemented.

See Appendix C for a summary of the Flex four-year evaluation.

In addition, progress monitoring will involve proven methods of data collection, such as curriculum-based measures (CBMs) and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). According to Lloyd, Forness, and Kavale (1998), research indicates that when teachers use valid, brief measures to set high reading goals and then monitor progress and make regular adjustments in instruction, reading outcomes are significantly improved. CBM involves monitoring student progress through direct, continuous assessment of basic skills in such areas as

reading fluency, comprehension, spelling, mathematics, and written expression. Fuchs and Deno (1991) found that CBM is highly correlated with more expensive, less instructionally relevant measures and when used in conjunction with decision rules results in improved learning of students who are not making progress toward grade-level expectancies. Also, according to information on the AIMSweb® website, “CBM assessment practices are based on 25 years of scientific research” and “are time efficient and inexpensive, yet produce accurate charts of student growth over time. Tests meet professional standards for reliability and validity.”

DIBELS are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development and are used in Illinois Reading First. As discussed on the DIBELS website, the measures were developed using the essential early literacy domains discussed in the reports of the National Reading Panel (2000) and the National Research Council (1998) to “assess student development of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and automaticity and fluency with the code. All measures have been thoroughly researched and demonstrated to be reliable and valid indicators of early literacy development and predictive of later reading proficiency to aid in the early identification of students who are not progressing as expected.”

In terms of the SAC training, an Instructional Design Team appointed by the ROEs and ISBE worked with national experts to design the professional development model used in the initiative. The training is based on assessment textbooks and videotapes by Richard Stiggins of the Assessment Training Institute of Portland, Oregon. Mr. Stiggins and his colleague Judith Arter consulted with ISBE in developing the assessment learning team process and supplied the SAC curriculum writers with insights based on their research and experience working with school-based teams. Further, MetriTech, Inc., conducted an independent assessment of the SAC Initiative through pre- and post-surveys and interviews with participants over a three-year period

and found that overall, teachers across grade levels and with varying levels of experience who adopted the SAC principles consistently reported increased confidence in teaching to the *Illinois Learning Standards* through their participation in the SAC initiative. Specifically, participants indicated that they were:

- More familiar with the *Illinois Learning Standards*.
- More likely to understand how to use the standards in planning classroom instruction and assessment.
- More confident in their ability to use the standards.
- More aware of the benefits of the standards.
- More likely to actually use the standards to plan classroom instruction.
- More likely to believe a standards-aligned instructional approach has a positive impact on student motivation and participation.

The SPD Project will employ best practice professional development in all training activities. The activities will focus on skills and knowledge needed to support higher levels of student achievement. They will also involve follow-up consultation at the demonstration sites to ensure that the knowledge and skills were acquired and subsequently implemented with integrity in the classroom. As discussed in item 3, *Coherent, Sustained Program of Training* earlier in this section, both Flex and SAC emphasize the importance of onsite consultation, including coaching. Skill mastery and application improve when follow-up support is provided. To that end, the RPDCs will provide follow-up technical assistance and consultation to the school demonstration sites, and the establishment of LEA coaches will help provide ongoing guidance and reinforcement.

5. *The proposed project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing services to the target population.*

State-Level Linkages

At the state level, linkages with other agencies and organizations will occur in several ways. The current SIG Advisory Committee will be reconstituted into a new SPD Project Advisory Committee, which will guide the work of the project. To ensure input from a wide range of stakeholders, membership will include representation from:

- Parents
- General and special education teachers
- Related service providers (e.g., school psychologists and social workers)
- Administrators, i.e., school district superintendent, building principal, special education director
- Member of the Illinois State Advisory Council (ISAC) on the Education of Children with Disabilities
- IHE general education and special education department faculty
- ROEs and/or RESPROs
- SPD project evaluator

In addition to representation on the SPD Project Advisory Committee, ISAC will receive regular progress reports of project activities and milestones. Its membership includes individuals with disabilities, parents of students with disabilities, special education administrators, a special education teacher, a school district superintendent, and state agency representatives from the Illinois departments of Corrections, Human Services-Office of Rehabilitation Services, and Children and Family Services. As the legal body established in accordance with IDEIA, ISAC is responsible for making recommendations to ISBE regarding the education of children and youth with disabilities. Therefore, it will be important that the members remain up-to-date on the

project. The receipt of current project information will allow them to identify ways that the project can support the accomplishment of their priorities and to provide recommendations of ways to improve the project.

To ensure linkages with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), which is the state agency responsible for vocational rehabilitation and Part C early intervention (birth to age 3) programs, ISBE will continue its direct involvement with the Illinois Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention (IICEI). The Interagency Coordinating Council Act, 20 ILCS 3970, established the ICC in 1990 to facilitate collaboration among state agencies and improve outcomes for youth with disabilities. The State Superintendent of Education and the Secretary of DHS serve as co-chairs of the Council. In addition, the ISBE Assistant Superintendent of Special Education is the agency representative on the Council. The ICC is charged with gathering and coordinating data on services for transition-age youth with disabilities; providing information, consultation, and technical assistance to state and local stakeholders; assisting state and local stakeholders in establishing interagency transition agreements; conducting an annual statewide evaluation of student transition outcomes and needs; and providing in-service training to consumers in developing and improving awareness of transition services. Student outcome data from the SPD grant project evaluation that is relevant to transition-age students will be shared with the ICC during the course of the project in order to enhance the ICC's ability to carry out its work. ISBE representation on the Council will also facilitate alignment of the State Personnel Development Plan with the state plan under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The IICEI is a governor-appointed advisory council that provides advice to and assists DHS in the performance of its duties related to the Early Intervention (EI) Program in Illinois.

Council members include state agency representatives, parents of children with disabilities, public or private EI providers, and a representative of the Illinois General Assembly. The ISBE Early Childhood Division Administrator is an ICEI member, and her representation ensures that ISBE, as the state educational agency, provides input and technical assistance to improve the quality of professional development available to meet the needs of personnel serving infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Another state-level linkage will involve parent organizations. According to a survey of 85 research studies cited in two National PTA publications, *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs*, 1998, and *Building Successful Partnerships: A Guide for Developing Parent and Family Involvement Programs*, 2000, “The influence of parent involvement is profound and provides comprehensive benefits for students, families and schools when parents and family members become participants in their children’s education and their lives.” Parent organization linkages will occur through the project activities involving the Parent Mentor projects, the Statewide Parent Technical Assistance Center, and the PTIs. Details of the involvement of these entities are discussed in *Section E Adequacy of Resources*, item 2.

State linkages will occur with professional organizations such as the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE), the Illinois School Psychologists Association, and the Illinois Council for Exceptional Children (ICEC), including the Illinois Teacher Education Division (ITED), etc. The ISBE Special Education Services Department has well-established relationships with these and other organizations through the current Illinois SIG and other department activities.

Regional and Local Linkages

Linkages will occur at the regional level by requiring that each RPDC be a collaborative

partnership of:

- One or more LEAs, which include special education joint agreements;
- One or more regional providers, such as ROEs or RESPROs;
- One or more IHEs; and
- One or more parent entities, such as a Parent Mentor Project, the statewide Parent Technical Assistance Center, or a PTI.

Further, establishment of school demonstration/data collection sites in each RPDC will support linkages at the local level among districts, schools, parents, and community service providers.

6. *Proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous student academic standards.*

Illinois is considered a national leader in establishing rigorous learning standards in all core academic subjects and an accountability system that measures student progress toward those standards, as evidenced by its *Quality Counts 2004* (Education Week, January 8, 2004) grade of A- in standards and accountability. The *Illinois Learning Standards* apply to all students in general and special education. ISBE has taken this a step further by developing performance indicators that assist teachers to conceptualize how students can demonstrate learning. In addition, alternate performance indicators have been developed to help teachers understand how to design instruction that provides students with significant disabilities access to the state learning standards. Consequently, it is expected that all schools will provide students with disabilities access to the rigorous academic curricula required by the *Illinois Learning Standards* in order to enable them to move successfully beyond high school into postsecondary education or employment.

The Illinois Professional Teaching Standards are designed to ensure that special and general

education personnel will have the knowledge and skills to make this possible. The assumption behind this proposal is that students with disabilities will be taught in general education classrooms, to the maximum extent appropriate, and will have access to the general education curriculum. The Illinois Professional Teaching Standards ensure that teachers not only have knowledge of the curriculum and the skills to teach it, but also have knowledge and skills that enable them to work together to help students achieve and be successful. The Illinois Professional Teaching Standards are an important source of content for the activities of the Illinois SPD Project, linking training activities directly to outcomes for students.

Project activities will also be integrated, to the maximum extent possible, with activities under any Personnel Preparation Grant project operated by an Illinois IHE. Several teacher-preparation IHEs submitted applications for the recent federal grant competition, and ISBE provided letters of support and agreement to partner with those who requested such. This partnership will provide an important mechanism for sharing of resources across projects and incorporation of training content into project curricula, thereby supporting a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning.

The SPD Project is aligned with other ISBE personnel development activities. For example, in Illinois educators are required to complete continuing professional development in order to renew their teaching and administrative certificates. Each RPDC will be required to obtain approval from the ISBE Certification Division as a provider of continuing professional development. Thus, the SPD Project will provide an additional resource to teachers and administrators in meeting certificate renewal requirements, since individuals trained through these activities will receive Continuing Professional Development Units toward renewal of their certificates and endorsements.

In addition, the ISBE Special Education Services Department has worked closely with the ISBE Teaching and Learning Services for all Children Center in developing the state's highly qualified requirements to ensure that they align with both NCLB and IDEIA. The SPD project director is involved in agency work to implement highly qualified requirements for special education personnel. The professional development and technical assistance provided through the SPD Project will support this implementation, particularly since it emphasizes collaboration between general and special education personnel in providing high-quality instruction to all students, including those with disabilities. This, along with the project activities associated with incorporating the professional development content into general and special education preservice curricula, will further support a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning.

All activities of the SPD Project are aligned with the Illinois Title II, Part A, application and plan. The Illinois plan for preparing, training, and recruiting high-quality teachers and principals seeks to have a positive impact on student achievement through development of preparation programs and opportunities for educators to be retrained in content areas of highest need. Through standards-based preparation programs and professional development opportunities targeted to specific-content/grade-level needs, educators will be given the resources to improve knowledge and skills. The fact that the activities in the Illinois Title II, Part A, plan target high-need schools, including low-performing schools whose student populations include minority students and students who are economically disadvantaged, will also help to ensure that these students are not taught at higher rates by teachers who are not highly qualified. Further, ISBE has a mechanism for examining professional development being provided by various agency divisions to determine alignment with state priorities and state professional development provider criteria in state law. This mechanism will be used to review the professional

development to be provided through the SPD Project.

Under its Title II, Part A, application and plan, Illinois also has the following performance goals/indicators with regard to personnel preparation and professional development:

- Annually increase the percentage of highly qualified teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals by 5 percent.
- Annually increase the percentage of teachers receiving high-quality professional development by 10 percent.
- Annually increase the percentage of school districts that receive induction and mentoring training and application pilots by 10 percent.
- Annually increase the percentage of school district recruitment programs, particularly those that attract new special education, mathematics, and science teachers in high-need schools, by 5 percent.

SPD Project activities will directly support these performance goals/indicators through emphasis on partnerships and collaboration between LEAs and IHEs, delivery of high-quality professional development, and technical assistance and coaching components.

D. Quality of Project Personnel

1) Employment of persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented.

As an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, ISBE is committed to providing equity in employment and services, irrespective of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. While no new ISBE personnel will be hired through this grant, personnel will likely be hired by external entities under project subgrants. The administrative agents of the subgrants will be required to seek applicants from underrepresented groups and to provide any special accommodations required for an applicant to participate in the application or interview process.

Accommodations will be made in the workplace to enable employees to perform their roles efficiently and effectively.

2) *Qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.*

Dr. Christopher Koch, ISBE Assistant Superintendent for Special Education, will provide general oversight for the Illinois SPD Project. Dr. Koch holds a Doctorate of Education in Education Policy and Leadership, a Master of Arts Degree in Transitional Special Education, and certification as a special education teacher. He has nearly 20 years of experience working at the local, state, and national levels in areas such as special education, with specialization in students with emotional/behavior disorders and learning disabilities; juvenile justice; School-to-Work and transition; and education policy and leadership. Dr. Koch is responsible for policy and procedural coordination of special education projects and services for ISBE. He is highly skilled in facilitating and promoting teamwork throughout ISBE in relation to special education. In addition to his oversight role within ISBE, Dr. Koch is an invaluable resource as a liaison to local, regional, state, and national special education organizations and agencies.

As the project manager, Beth Hanselman, ISBE Supervisor for Special Education Services, will provide administrative direction for the project. Ms. Hanselman holds a Bachelor of Science in special education and a Master of Arts in legal studies, with an emphasis in administrative law. She also holds a Type 10 LBS I (special education teacher) certificate. Ms. Hanselman has more than 15 years of experience in the field of education, including special education teaching experience, and 11 years of service at ISBE. She has in-depth knowledge and experience in Illinois teacher certification requirements and development of state certification tests, including IHE collaboration, as well as management experience in special education general supervision and monitoring, and business and budget planning.

Kathryn Cox, principal education consultant in the ISBE Special Education Services Division, will serve as project director. Ms. Cox has nearly 24 years of experience in the special education field, including 15 years at ISBE. She has management and staff experience in preparation and administration of federal grants, state funding programs, policy development, pupil personnel services program consultation, programmatic technical assistance, parent training and partnerships activities, and personnel preparation and development. Ms. Cox has served as project director for the Illinois SIG for nearly two years. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in education, standard elementary and secondary teaching certificates endorsed in special education, and a Master of Arts degree in business administration. She also holds a Type 75 school administrator certificate, with an endorsement for special education director.

Barbara Sims will serve as the project evaluation consultant through her direct involvement with the Virtual Information Management of Education Outcomes, (VIMEO), an evaluation platform that will be used for certain SPD Project evaluation activities. Ms. Sims is a principal education consultant in the ISBE Special Education Services Division and is responsible for development, implementation, and evaluation of state and federally funded education programs, including the EBD/PBIS Initiative. She has approximately 23 years of experience in special education as an educator, administrator, and consultant. Ms. Sims holds a Bachelor of Science degree in deaf education and Master of Arts degree in educational administration.

All résumés are included in Appendix D.

In addition, the ISBE Special Education Services Division has established two new positions to handle the data responsibilities associated with the general supervision and monitoring system. Although these positions have yet to be filled, both will have responsibilities for the analysis of data elements that will have an impact on the services of students who have or are suspected of

having a disability, performing cross-system checks of data quality, acting as a communication link between various publics, providing assistance with ad hoc reporting, and assisting in the overall division accomplishment of activities for the purpose of improving educational programs. The successful candidates will be required to have multiple years of experience in conducting research evaluation and policy studies and experience with data collection and analysis and Microsoft™ office products, with experience working with data warehouses preferred. Because these individuals will be responsible for collaborating with all divisions responsible for collecting special education data, one will also be involved in the SPD Project as the project data specialist. In that capacity, this position will serve as a data liaison to the external statewide evaluator and will facilitate access to the various ISBE data systems that will be needed for project evaluation, e.g., School Report Card, Special Education Data System, LEA Profiles.

3) Qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

The qualifications required of consultants, subgrantees, and subcontractors are directly linked to the specific requirements of the appropriate activity to be addressed. Additional ISBE staff will contribute technical assistance and support to the project by consulting on professional development content, such as scientific, research-based reading instruction, parent partnerships, evaluation activities, and disbursing funding to subgrantees. The staff time of these individuals is anticipated to be less than 1 percent each.

Dana Kinley, ISBE Curriculum and Instruction Division Administrator, has multiple years of experience as a teacher and administrator, and most recently in carrying out the ISBE Reading First program. Ms. Kinley or a member of her staff will provide consultation on scientific, research-based reading instruction. Tim Imler, ISBE Funding and Disbursement Division

Administrator, has multiple years of experience with state and federal grant budgets and disbursements. He and his staff will process the approved RPDC and PTI subgrants and monitor expenditures via subgrantee expenditure reports and voucher payments.

Debra Kunz is the Statewide Parent Consultant for the Statewide Training and Technical Assistance Center and will serve as the parent consultant to this project. She will work with the Parent Mentor Projects, the Parent Technical Assistance Center, and the PTIs to facilitate the parent collaboration activities of the SPD Project. Ms. Kunz is the parent of an adult son with disabilities, and she has numerous years of experience in parent advocacy and technical assistance, including more than five years as the director of an Illinois PTI.

The ISBE Certification Division and Federal Grants and Programs Division will also provide support. Bob Bigham is a principal consultant in the Certification Division and is involved in development of the Illinois highly qualified requirements for general and special education teachers. He has a thorough working knowledge of certification requirements and IHE preservice programs and will provide consultation to the SPD Project in that capacity. Gail Meisner is a principal consultant in the Federal Grants and Programs Division, and has multiple years of experience working with the ISBE System of Support for low-performing schools. She will provide consultation to the SPD Project to facilitate collaboration with the RESPROs.

Entities eligible to apply for grants to establish the RPDCs include LEAs, IHEs, and regional providers, or some combination thereof, in collaboration with parent entities. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have met the collaborative and other criteria specified in the RFP. Similarly, entities receiving contracts or subgrants, including the PTIs, must show that they can meet all outlined specifications. The statewide evaluation contract will be competitively bid in accordance with ISBE standard procedures. The evaluator will be selected

based on professional experience and qualifications, a successful track record with similar evaluation projects, and the quality of the proposal in relation to the stated goals and anticipated outcomes of the SPD Project.

E. Adequacy of Resources

1) The adequacy of applicant support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources.

The principal ISBE office is located adjacent to the Capitol in Springfield, Illinois, with a satellite office in Chicago. ISBE staff is provided with adequate space and equipment, including up-to-date computers, printers, and Internet access to perform their job responsibilities. The agency video conferencing system connects the Springfield Office with the Chicago office, allowing staff and agency committees to interact in both video and audio formats.

The project will be managed through the ISBE Special Education Services Center, Special Education Services Division-Springfield, which is responsible for general supervision and monitoring of special education programs, programmatic technical assistance and guidance to educators and parents, the State Personnel Development Plan, the educational surrogate parent program, and grant-funded initiatives to improve service delivery to school-age students. Staff from other ISBE divisions will support the project: Data Analysis and Progress Reporting, Funding and Disbursements, Legal, and Data Systems. ISBE administers numerous federal grants and has well-established fiscal and programmatic procedures to ensure they are carried out efficiently, effectively, and in compliance with all federal requirements. ISBE staff have worked diligently to develop, coordinate, and align the efforts of this grant with NCLB; IDEIA, Parts B and D; and other federal and state initiatives that significantly improve Illinois educational services.

2) *The relevance and demonstrated commitment of partners to project implementation and success.*

Collaborative partnerships are an integral part of the SPD Project. Multiple partnerships will be formed within and across local, regional, and state levels. The roles of required and other partners who will participate actively in specific, known ways in the activities outlined in this grant are described here briefly. (See Appendix E for Letters of Agreement to Partner from or existing interagency agreements with these entities.)

Required Partners

Institutions of Higher Education: Two IHEs have formally agreed to partner with ISBE in the SPD Project. Illinois State University partnered with ISBE in developing the grant application by providing expertise on the project evaluation. In addition, the ISU Special Education and the School Psychology departments have agreed to partner with ISBE by providing consultation and expertise on the implementation and evaluation of school-based problem solving, early intervening services, and RTI at the school level. Further, they will be involved in work under the project to incorporate the professional development content into preservice curricula.

Loyola University has also agreed to partner with ISBE. Dr. David Prasse, chair of Curriculum, Instruction, and Educational Psychology, is currently partnering with ISBE through the EBD/PBIS Initiative (see *Significance* section) in that his department will likely be integrally involved in the expansion and implementation of the VIMEO evaluation platform. (See *Quality of Project Evaluation* section.) Because this platform will also be used to collect school- and student-level data for the SPD Project, Dr. Prasse's partnership will be integral to the project evaluation. Dr. Prasse also has extensive knowledge and expertise in school-based problem

solving and will serve as a potential training resource to the RPDCs.

As previously discussed, IHEs will be represented on the SPD Project Advisory Committee and will be eligible applicants or co-applicants, as well as required partners, in the RPDCs. Therefore, IHE partnerships are guaranteed at the state and regional levels. In addition, ITED has agreed to partner in facilitating the examination of preservice curricula and the process of incorporating the professional development content of the SPD Project into the curricula.

State Agencies: To address the requirement that ISBE partner with the state agency responsible for administering IDEA, Part C, education, child care, and vocational rehabilitation programs, DHS has agreed to partner with ISBE through existing mechanisms, including interagency agreements for transition from Part C to Part B and secondary transition. The interagency agreement for Part C is currently being updated to incorporate data sharing, with the goals of improving Part B Child Find activities and assessing child outcomes. When the tracking system is fully implemented, and the data sharing system is operational, DHS and ISBE will be able to track each child as he/she exits Part C and to determine if he/she is eligible for Part B services or transition into other preschool services and programs. The current agreement and a draft of the updated agreement are provided in Appendix E. As discussed under “Linkages” in the *Quality of Project Design* section, ISBE partners with DHS through the IICC (secondary transition services) and the ICEI. In addition, ISBE has an interagency agreement with the Illinois Head Start Association, the purpose of which is to promote development of a statewide, coordinated, interagency service delivery system for preschool children—from birth until eligible for public school—and their families. Although this agreement is also being updated, a draft of the revised agreement was not available at the time of proposal preparation.

There are also collaborative efforts in professional development for EI, early education, and

child care providers. Specifically, Child Find products and activities are coordinated with EI and products are available to all early childhood entities. Also, through STARNET (see “Building on Successful Initiatives and Systems” in the *Significance* section) the following collaborations occur:

- Representatives from EI, child care, colleges and universities, special education, state-funded Pre-K programs, Head Start, and others are members of each STARNET regional advisory committee.
- All STARNET training is open to the above-listed representatives, as space allows, and collaboratively sponsored training is conducted.
- Resource libraries are open to families and early childhood personnel.
- STARNET and the state Pre-K technical assistance system meet regularly and coordinate activities.
- Training and technical assistance is provided for transition of children from Part C to Part B services.

The ISBE Division of Early Childhood, the DHS-Bureau of Early Intervention, the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, the Illinois Early Childhood Intervention Clearinghouse, Head Start, the Illinois subdivision of the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, and AmeriCorps Benefits Children Literacy Program collaborate to conduct Sharing a Vision, a biennial statewide early childhood conference. To expand on the established partnership with EI, child care, Head Start, and other programs, the professional development provided through the SPD Project will be open to personnel from these programs, as space allows.

Local Educational Agencies: In preparing this grant proposal, ISBE partnered with NSSED,

which has extensive experience in implementing Flex. NSSED and its member school districts have agreed to continue this partnership throughout the grant by providing consultation to ISBE on the Flex training cycles and principal-led teams, and to lend their expertise in the implementation and evaluation of school-based problem solving, early intervening services, and RTI at the school level. In addition, all of the project LEAs involved in Flex have established a “Flex Consortium,” which has provided them an avenue for collaboration in the design and delivery of the Flex training cycles and other professional development events, data collection and evaluation of Flex, sharing expertise and resources, and problem-solving around challenges encountered in implementing Flex. As such, the Flex Consortium will serve as an invaluable resource to the RPDCs and ISBE.

While not technically considered to be LEAs, ROEs serve as intermediate education agencies involved in professional development for school district personnel within their geographic areas. The ROEs of Will and Grundy counties established the Professional Development Alliance (PDA), which is an agency that provides staff development, workshops, training, graduate education courses, consulting services, facilitation and planning services, and technical assistance to schools and other educational agencies. The PDA has agreed to partner under the SPD Project in conjunction with their involvement with the SAC Initiative. The PDA has played an integral part in development and implementation of the SAC training. Dr. Jay Linksman, executive director, will provide consultation to ISBE and the RPDCs in identifying the best way to incorporate the SAC curriculum into the SPD Project professional development and in building on the SAC coaching component at the local level.

Other state, regional, and local LEA partnerships will be fostered in multiple ways through the project. At the state level, LEAs will be represented on the SPD Project Advisory Committee

and will be eligible applicants or co-applicants, LEAs will be required partners in the RPDCs at the regional level, and establishment of school demonstration/data collection sites will provide a mechanism for school partnerships with the project at the local level.

Other Partners

Parents: Illinois has three federally funded PTI centers: Family Matters in Effingham, the Family Resource Center on Disabilities in Chicago, and Designs for Change in Chicago. Under the current SIG, ISBE partnered with the PTIs to carry out the Parent Training and Partnerships Project. Under the PTI project, each PTI received grant funds from ISBE to conduct training and technical assistance activities that were designed to enhance parents' abilities to participate in educating their children with disabilities and thereby strengthen parent and school partnerships.

In 2004, ISBE made a decision to build on the success of the Parent Training and Partnerships Project by transitioning it into a more regionalized system of parent training and technical assistance. Therefore, two RFPs were issued to establish the Parent Mentor Project and the Statewide Parent Technical Assistance Center (see the *Significance* section). Both RFPs required joint proposals between not-for-profit parent organizations, i.e., PTIs or other local or regional parent entities, and LEAs. As a result, 11 parent mentor projects were established and are just beginning operation, and the Parent Technical Assistance Center began operation in early 2005. Unfortunately, none of the four Illinois PTIs applied due to their stated position that parent organizations should not be required to partner with LEAs

As previously discussed, the RPDCs will be required to partner with one or more parent entities, such as the Parent Mentor Projects in their areas and/or the PTIs, and to provide professional development to enhance parents' understanding of school-based problem solving, early intervening services, effective reading instruction, RTI, etc. The RPDCs will also be

required to allocate funds to support the involvement of parents in their regional activities.

Parents will also be members of the SPD Project Advisory Committee. In addition, in an effort to further involve the PTIs in the project, ISBE has allocated funds in the SPD Project budget for a subgrant to one or more PTIs for development, printing, and dissemination of a series of parent handbooks/resource guides focused on the professional development topics of the project. (See Letters of Agreement to Partner in Appendix E.)

3) *The budget is adequate to support the proposed project.*

The budget was developed based on the experience of ISBE with existing statewide training and technical assistance initiatives; therefore, ISBE is confident that the proposed budget is adequate to support the planned activities. A significant portion of the budget will be used for personnel preparation and professional development activities. Because the project evaluation is considered essential to improving the quality and ensuring the sustainability of the project, every effort has been made to allocate funds judiciously according to the evaluation activities to be conducted. The salary and benefits for the project director are the only personnel costs included and are essential to maintain the integrity of this project and to accomplish its many activities and anticipated outcomes. The project support staff person and additional ISBE personnel will contribute time and expertise to the project, as discussed in the *Quality of Project Personnel* and *Quality of Management Plan* sections, at no cost to the SPD Project. ISBE will provide facilities, equipment, and space for personnel and meetings. Further, the SPD Project Advisory Committee and ISAC will provide advice at no cost other than expenses incurred to attend meetings. Cost savings also will be accomplished in other ways, for example, ISBE divisions will handle many functions of the project, such as fiscal management. (See *Part II* for detailed budget information.)

4) *The costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance.*

Budget expenditures for the current project as outlined in *Part II* are directly related to the objectives and activities outlined in this proposal. As previously stated, the budget was developed based on the experience of ISBE with existing statewide training and technical assistance initiatives, as well as its experience with the current Illinois SIG. The statewide initiatives have budget allocations similar to those of the RPDCs and are able to conduct activities of a similar scope that lead to accomplishment of their project objectives and result in the intended outcomes. Although the activities of this project are ambitious, the requested amounts are reasonable and cost-effective given the fact that similar models have been used before, providing ISBE staff and partners with experience regarding cost and satisfactory completion of activities.

5) *Potential for continued support, including demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities.*

The Illinois SPD Project is designed to change the infrastructure of personnel development in Illinois by improving accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of educators and parents in the state. The systemic nature of the SPD Project ensures that its impact will continue beyond the conclusion of project funding. For example:

- a. A lasting outcome of the project will be a new regional system for personnel development. Through the RPDCs, school districts will have access to high-quality, research-based professional development focused on a common theme and standardized format, which will improve the consistency of knowledge and skills obtained throughout the state. The involvement of IHEs will have an impact on preservice curricula so that the professional development content reaches future teachers, related services personnel, and administrators.

- b. The partnerships developed to support these new structures will remain in place. The teams within the school demonstration sites will continue beyond the grant period, which will continually improve services to students. The collaboration of LEAs, IHEs, regional providers, and parents through the RPDCs will facilitate long-lasting relationships focused on improving student outcomes. Through these collaborative efforts, colleges and universities also will increase their capacity to prepare additional personnel and to offer blended training programs to general and special education personnel.
- c. The partnerships developed between well-trained general and special education personnel will continue to increase the potential of students beyond the duration of the project.
- d. Quality teacher preparation expectations will be raised and more systematic approaches to professional development will be ingrained into the educational service delivery system. Teachers, related services personnel, administrators, parents, community members, and college and university faculty will have come to look to the system as a resource for individual and collective growth on behalf of students with disabilities.

The Illinois SPD Project offers an opportunity to build a systemic, sustainable infrastructure that connects to other student and personnel reform efforts by providing strategies for integrating general and special education; strengthens partnerships among stakeholders, including parents; and sets in place a new and permanent way of viewing and delivering personnel development.

F. Quality of Management Plan

- 1) *The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing tasks.*

The SPD Project management plan meets the federal requirements, including provision of sufficient personnel and financial resources through the grant proposal and ongoing daily

responsibilities, to produce quality deliverables in a timely manner. As noted in the *Project Personnel* section, ISBE personnel assigned project responsibilities are Beth Hanselman (project manager), Kathryn Cox (project director), Barbara Sims (project evaluation consultant), a project data specialist (to be named), and a project support staff person.

Job Responsibilities

The project director will be responsible for overall operation of the SPD Project and for accomplishing project activities in accordance with the timelines and milestones. The project director will:

- Work with other ISBE staff to develop and integrate data collection systems.
- Develop, disseminate, and oversee RFPs for the RPDC subgrants.
- Develop specifications and negotiate contracts for project evaluation and PTI subgrant(s).
- Work closely with the SPD Project Advisory Committee and ISAC.
- Provide technical assistance to subgrantees and contractors, as needed.

The project director will work closely with other ISBE staff members (staff responsible for compliance, early childhood services, grants management, personnel certification, continuing professional development, standards and assessment, system of support, etc.) and other state agencies (DHS, Illinois Board of Higher Education, etc.) and organizations (IAASE, ICEC, parent organizations) as needed. The project director will also work closely with the project evaluator to ensure that data collected are useful to the project and its participants. The project evaluator's role in determining effectiveness of the grant activities will also link to the project director. As with any other key ISBE personnel, the project director will be responsible for initiating, facilitating, and overseeing other short-term working groups formed to address specific project needs.

Existing ISBE staff will provide clerical support for the project, including completing activities related to preparing for SPD Project Advisory Committee meetings and follow-up work; processing travel vouchers; completing all work related to the ISBE electronic financial system, including tracking subgrants and contracts; and providing other typing, printing, and follow-up activities, as needed. Also, appropriate ISBE staff will handle fiscal activities for the SPD Project. Dr. Koch will devote 3 percent of his time for Illinois SIG and supplemental project oversight, the project manager will devote 5 percent of her time to administrative direction for the Illinois SIG and supplemental project, the project director will devote 70 percent of her time to day-to-day Illinois SPD Project management, the project evaluation consultant will devote 3 percent of her time to coordinating the modification of the VIMEO data platform to collect student- and school-level data for the SPD Project evaluation, the project data specialist will devote 10 percent of time to the Illinois SIG, and the support staff person will devote 5 percent of time to clerical support.

Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones

Table 11 in the *Quality of Project Design* section delineates all SPD Project activities, responsibilities, and timelines. Table 14 specifies the expected milestones.

Table 14. State Improvement Grant Milestones

Activity	Milestones/Project Year	Completion Date
1.1	Finalize and issue RFP for RPDCs, <i>Year 1</i>	October 2005
1.1	Award RPDC subgrants, <i>Year 1</i>	January 2005
1.1	Continue RPDC subgrants, <i>Years 2-5</i>	Annually
1.3	Deliver professional development through RPDCs, <i>Year 1</i>	Summer 2006
1.3	Expand and continue training through RPDCs, <i>Years 2-5</i>	September 2010
1.4	Recruit and select school demonstration sites; <i>Year 1</i>	April 2005
1.4	Expand the number of demonstration sites; <i>Years 2-5</i>	Annually
1.5 & 1.6	Recruit and train LEA coaches; <i>Year 1</i>	April 2005
1.5 & 1.6	Expand the number of coaches in conjunction with expansion of demonstration sites; <i>Years 2-5</i>	June 2010
1.7	Provide technical assistance (TA) to demonstration sites through RPDCs; <i>Year 1</i>	June 2005
1.7	Expand and continue TA through RPDCs; <i>Years 2-5</i>	September 2010
2.2	Issue subgrant(s) to PTI center(s) for development of parent handbooks; <i>Year 1</i>	January 2006
2.2	Develop and disseminate parent handbooks, <i>Year 1</i>	September 2006
2.2	Continue PTI subgrants and development/dissemination of parent handbooks, <i>Years 2-5</i>	September 2010
2.3 & 2.4	Recruit parents in demonstration sites to participate in training and meetings with RPDCs.	Spring 2006
2.3 & 2.4	Continue recruitment of parents as demonstration sites are added, <i>Years 2-5</i>	June 2010
3.2	Deliver overview training sessions to IHE constituents, <i>Year 1</i>	Summer 2006

Activity	Milestones/Project Year	Completion Date
3.2	Continue overview training for IHE constituents, <i>Years 2-5</i>	July 2010
3.4	Establish workgroups of IHE faculty to review preservice curricula and incorporate RPDC professional development content into curricula, <i>Year 1</i>	Fall 2006
3.4	Convene workgroups and provide technical assistance through RPDCs, <i>Year 1</i>	Spring 2007
3.4	Continue workgroups and technical assistance, <i>Years 2-5</i>	August 2010
4.1	Issue RFP for project evaluation, <i>Year 1</i>	October 2005
4.1	Award five-year evaluation contract, <i>Year 1</i>	January 2006
4.2	Design and implement data collection structure, <i>Year 1</i>	April 2006
4.2	Collect baseline data, <i>Year 1</i>	June 2006
4.2	Collect evaluation data at student, school, district, and regional levels, <i>Years 2-5</i>	July 2010
4.4	Conduct quarterly data analysis, <i>Years 2-5</i>	August 2010
4.5	Prepare annual performance reports, <i>Years 1-5</i>	Annually in June

2) *Ensuring diversity of perspectives in project operation, including parents, teachers, the business community, various disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, etc.*

Ensuring diverse perspectives is a core guiding assumption of the SPD Project, and methods for obtaining them are built into all activities at every level. Collaborative partnerships are built into major objectives; occur at local, regional, and state levels; and are generally a precondition for obtaining a subgrant.

Proposal development was also based on ensuring a diversity of perspectives. The current SIG Advisory Committee provided input on the focus of the project and several committee

members reviewed and provided feedback on the final proposal. This committee represents the required partners, including parents, teachers, members of the broad education community, and others. The new SPD Advisory Committee will also represent the required partners and will meet regularly to advise the project director on project activities. The involvement of ISAC will provide another avenue for obtaining perspectives from a wide variety of stakeholders.

Through the RPDC partnerships, it is expected that a diversity of perspectives will be provided on an ongoing basis from geographically diverse points of view, which will be useful to the continual improvement of the Illinois education system and refinement of various SPD Project elements.

G. Quality of Project Evaluation

1) The evaluation methods are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes.

External evaluators will implement the proposed evaluation plan (see Table 15) annually for each regional center and participating district/school to use in strategic planning. Student, school (building), and district data will be collected by regional evaluators who will be hired in each RPDC before full project implementation. Data from these local/regional evaluations will be summarized and analyzed across all participating regions/districts by the statewide evaluation coordinator. Because of the amount allocated for statewide evaluation, ISBE is required to competitively bid the contract for this portion of the evaluation. Eligible applicants will include IHEs and other entities with experience in evaluating large-scale projects. Responsibilities of the regional evaluators and statewide evaluation coordinator follow.

The statewide evaluation coordinator will coordinate and assume responsibility for all project evaluation components, and specifically will be required to:

- Develop all evaluation instruments (see Table 16).
- Develop effective and efficient data-reporting mechanisms to be used by each regional center, aligned with and, where appropriate, using existing ISBE data collection systems.
- Publish a standardized school district evaluation plan that matches the activities for use by each regional evaluator.
- Provide data-collection and reporting technical assistance to regional centers and local districts/schools.
- Summarize and analyze all data obtained from the four RPDCs.
- Complete annual reports to be reviewed by ISBE and the SPD Project Advisory Committee.
- Serve as a member of the SPD Project Advisory Committee.

The regional evaluators will be required to:

- Participate in a training overview before regional implementation of training.
- Collaborate with the statewide evaluation coordinator to establish the regional data-collection system.
- Collaborate with demonstration site participants to implement the regional data-collection system.
- Provide technical assistance to demonstration sites on the data collection system.
- Coordinate data-collection efforts in the demonstration and selected nonparticipating schools in their region.
- Keep the statewide evaluator informed of any challenges to the data-collection efforts so that technical assistance can be provided.
- Submit data quarterly in an agreed-upon format to the statewide evaluator.

Table 15. Evaluation Plan to Assess Project Outcomes

<p><u>Project Goal:</u> Establish and implement a coordinated, regionalized system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities, as measured by improved student progress and performance.</p>
<p><i><u>Objective 1:</u> To deliver research-based professional development and technical assistance, based on an established training framework developed by Flex and SAC, through development of regional plans that follow a common format and criteria established at the state level and prepared in partnership with LEAs, IHEs, regional providers, and parents.</i></p>
<p><u>Evaluation Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what degree are the RPDCs delivering the technical assistance as proposed in the project?• To what degree are strategies/methods taught as part of the project actually implemented at the student/classroom/building levels?• Do increased knowledge and skills lead to improved school performance, as measured by state assessment results in reading and math and by curriculum-based measurement results in reading?• Do increased knowledge and skills lead to improved school performance, as measured by increasing attendance and decreased grade retention and suspension/expulsion rates?• Do increased knowledge and skills lead to an increasing percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in an LRE?• Do increased knowledge and skills reduce the disproportionality of racial/ethnic minorities and students who receive free and reduced lunch in special education referral and placement rates?

- Do increased knowledge and skills lead to an increased percentage of students exiting special education?

Data Sources:

1) Training and Technical Assistance Logs

a. Each RPDC will keep a log of the number of training sessions given and the number and type of participants. Participants will complete a conference evaluation form for each training session attended, including an assessment of the degree of alignment with state teaching standards.

b. Each technical assistant in each RPDC will keep a log of the number and types of technical assistance and/or consultations provided to local schools. School staff receiving this technical assistance will complete satisfaction surveys, including an assessment of the degree of alignment with state teaching standards.

2) Based on observations by the regional evaluator (or local district designee) and self-reports of building-level personnel, a critical components checklist will be completed for each set of strategies taught as part of the project. Critical components checklists monitor treatment integrity during coaching/training and verify accuracy of implementation. Such checklists reflect observable critical components that will be developed for all aspects of the critical skills/methods taught as part of the project.

3) Student Performance and Progress

a. All standardized accountability assessments in reading and math (ISAT, PSAE, and IAA) given by Illinois school districts will be used as student outcome measures at grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 for 2006. Beginning in 2007, student ISAT outcome measures will be available in grades 3 through 8 and on the PSAE at grade 11. The percentages of students meeting

reading and math *Illinois Learning Standards*, as measured by ISAT, PSAE, and IAA, will be used to determine project impact at the district, regional, and statewide levels.

b. CBM progress-monitoring data in reading (e.g., Dynamic Indicators of Early Learning, DIBELS, CBM oral reading probes) will be used to assess individual student reading outcomes. Reading was chosen for student outcomes tracked by individual student, as this is the focus of the proposed project. As part of the project, all demonstration sites will be expected to universally screen students using DIBELS or CBM reading probes at least three times per year. In addition, students with specified levels of low performance will be required to be monitored monthly or weekly, depending on the degree of deficit. All of these data will be extracted from district electronic files (using an Internet-based data management system, such as AIMSweb® or entered into evaluation databases by the regional evaluators or their district-level designees). A variety of outcome analyses are possible, including degree of discrepancy with grade-level peers, average words gained per week (or other DIBELS metric), percentage of students meeting expected year-end benchmarks compared with fall performance or performance in previous years; disaggregation of data by at-risk group and initial fall performance (using DIBELS/CBM). Comparisons will be made using national standards (Goods benchmarks for DIBELS or those provided by AIMSweb®), normative data for districts, and normative data across all participating districts.

4) School records for each demonstration site will be reviewed to determine individual (for students receiving interventions), building, district, regional, and statewide effects of the project based on attendance, suspension/expulsion, graduation/drop-out, and retention rates. These data are available in student files, in end-of-year reports submitted to ISBE by school

districts, and through VIMEO, an existing data platform that will be modified to provide for school- and student-level data entry for this project. Regional evaluators will analyze these data annually for participating schools, and pre-/post-measures will be assessed for changes associated with project implementation. These data will also be disaggregated by at-risk groups, to the extent possible, and included as part of the evaluation.

- 5) Child count data for each demonstration site and data from LEA profiles at the district level will be aggregated within regions, and subsequently statewide, to determine the level of LRE for students with disabilities who are receiving special education services.
- 6) Data from school and district report cards will be reviewed to determine the race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender composition of the overall school district population of the demonstration sites, and building and district records will be reviewed to determine the race/ethnicity, disability category, gender, and socioeconomic status of students referred for, placed in, and exiting special education.

Timelines:

- 1) Data collection will be ongoing and summarized annually.
- 2) Regional and statewide evaluators and regional technical assistants will use the checklists in fall of Year 1 to determine the baseline status of all project components. In spring of each project year, implementation status will be determined for all project components by direct measurement by regional evaluators or their district-level designee using the approved classroom sampling strategy to directly assess the degree to which the project model components have been implemented to determine treatment integrity. Data collection will occur quarterly.
- 3) A baseline will be determined for reading and math levels for the state assessment (ISAT and

PSAE) in Year 1 at appropriate grade levels and then will be collected and summarized annually. Ongoing CBM data in reading will be collected and summarized annually.

- 4) Attendance, suspension/expulsion, graduation/drop-out, and retention rates will be determined annually.
- 5) A baseline for LRE placement will be determined during Year 1 and then collected and summarized annually.
- 6) Baseline rates for various race/ethnic, socioeconomic status, gender, and disability categories will be collected for referral, placement, and exiting for special education. Data will then be collected and summarized.

Objective 2: Increase the participation of parents in decision-making across district sites.

Evaluation Question:

- *Does the implementation of the skills and methods related to this project lead to increased parent participation in the decision making process?*

Data Sources:

- 1) Parent participation in training sequences and completed evaluation forms.
- 2) A review of problem-solving meetings and IEPs/Annual Reviews at the building level to determine what percentage of parents are in attendance.

Timelines:

- 1) Attendance at training will be assessed throughout the timeline of the training portion of the project.
- 2) During Year 1, a baseline of parent participation at problem-solving and IEP meetings for demonstration sites will be determined. Parent participation rates then will be collected and summarized annually.

Objective 3: Incorporate professional development content into IHE general and special education preservice curricula.

Evaluation Question:

- To what degree are higher education preservice training programs incorporating the skills/methods that are part of this project into their curricula?

Data Sources:

- 1) Each department chair/program coordinator of a preservice training program for teachers and related service personnel will complete a survey indicating the extent to which the skills/methods taught as part of the proposed project are integrated into their curricula.
- 2) A review of course syllabi addressing the knowledge and skills of the training project will be completed to determine integration of the training into preservice programs.

Timeline:

- 1) Both of these evaluation activities will be completed biennially and at the end of the project.

Objective 4: Evaluate the effectiveness of project activities.

Evaluation Question:

- *To what degree does a coordinated professional development program that is delivered regionally have an impact on the outcomes of students with disabilities?*

Data Sources:

- 1) All data sources from the first three objectives will inform the evaluation of this objective.

Timeline:

- 1) Reviews of evaluation data will occur quarterly (through the SPD Project Advisory Committee) and annually (through the annual project evaluation report), as well as at the end of the project.

2) *Evaluation methods provide for examining effectiveness of project implementation strategies.*

As detailed in Table 15, project evaluation will be formative and summative, based on a variety of sources and data-collection methods. Evaluation goals will include:

- Provide RPDCs and participating school districts with well-conceived annual analyses of their progress in order to guide data-based strategic planning at the RPDC, district, and school building levels.
- Provide the SPD Project Advisory Committee and ISBE with ongoing and timely information about project implementation.
- Assess the degree to which RPDCs have implemented project goals and activities.
- Assess the degree to which participating districts/schools have accurately implemented the training components so that improved student outcomes will be realized.
- Directly assess project effects on academic and behavioral outcomes for participating students, particularly at-risk students and students with disabilities.
- Assess the degree to which Illinois develops the capacity at the regional level to support training and provide technical assistance in the future expansion of this approach.

3) *The evaluation methods include objective performance measures that are related to the intended project outcomes and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.*

Table 16 provides a detailed outline of objective performance measures and evaluation tools that directly align with the intended project outcomes and will produce quantitative and qualitative data. Existing ISBE data systems will be used wherever possible for collection of school-, district-, and state-level data. These systems include, but are not limited to, the new Special Education Data System being developed under the Illinois GSEG to collect data specific to students with disabilities and special education programs (e.g., incidence rates/dispropor-

tionality, LRE statistics, graduation/drop-out rates, suspension/expulsion) and which will be used to produce such reports as LEA Profiles; the federal IDEA, Part B, Annual Performance Report, etc.; the new Student Information System that will help school districts to provide more accurate student information across the student population; and school, district, and state report cards.

Data collection at the student and school levels will be streamlined through use of the ISBE VIMEO, which was originally developed for use in the EBD/PBIS Statewide Project. VIMEO is intended to be a virtual platform-based, automated information system of data collection related to ISBE statewide projects. Although the system will not be fully operational at the start of the SPD Project, it will be integrated into the data collection methodology within the first two years.

The VIMEO system will consist of four interrelated modules that will function interdependently as one virtual database system. All modules will have output functions that will allow for graphing of relevant data to include school demographic profiles. Graphing features will allow for the selection of predesigned graphs or customized graphs for an individual or group of schools. All modules will also have an input/export feature that will allow for the timely export of information out of the VIMEO system, or for the import of relevant data variables into the system, to limit redundant data-collection efforts.

Module I–Schoolwide Data: Module I of the VIMEO system will serve the function of data collection on all project implementation and schoolwide outcome data. Through this module, the user will be able to enter school-related data and demographic information.

Module II–Project Communication: Module II of the VIMEO system will serve the function of data collection and information dissemination for all project-related communication. Through this module, the user will be able to enter information related to project events, such as training

and meetings. Outputs for this module will include training mailing lists, training mailing labels, project reports, and meeting lists and schedules.

Module III–Individual Student: Module III of the VIMEO system will serve the function of data collection on all individual student, and when relevant, student family data-related variables. Through this module, the user will be able to enter individual student and individual school demographics. The user will also be able to access project data-collection instruments.

Module IV–Database Linkages: Module IV of the VIMEO system will serve the function of access and linkage to other relevant educational database systems. Through this module the user will be able to link to the ISBE Special Education database, the Illinois Interactive School Report Card, and other relevant Illinois databases.

4) The evaluation methods will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

As stated previously, the project evaluation will be both formative and summative. The formative components of the evaluation plan will ensure that periodic assessment toward intended outcomes occurs. Data will be collected at the student, school, and district levels to monitor the impact of project activities on student and school performance. Data collection at the student level will allow the school-based teams to regularly review student progress and the effectiveness of instruction, assessment, and interventions. This will ensure that timely adjustments can be made to interventions and instruction to improve student performance.

Data collection at the regional level will provide for ongoing evaluation of professional development and technical assistance activities so that continual improvements can be made. For example, professional development activities will be evaluated using the ISBE standardized form in which the evaluation statements are aligned with the Illinois Professional Teaching

Standards. As discussed earlier, a standardized critical components checklist will be developed by the statewide project evaluator and used to evaluate technical assistance services from the RPDCs. At the state level, the statewide project evaluator will be required to attend all SPD Project Advisory Committee meetings and to communicate regularly with the project director, thereby ensuring that continual improvements can be made to the project.

Table 16. Overview of Evaluation Methods Based on Level (Student, School, District, Regional, and Overall Project Levels)

Level	Evaluation Requirement	Data Needed	Data Source	Data-Collection Instrument (if applicable)	Timeline
<i>Student</i>	Changes in student performance	State assessment results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Math 	Student-level assessment report		Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter
	Student progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIBELS, CBM, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computerized system, e.g., AIMSweb® 	Ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIMEO (PBIS Platform) 	Quarterly or semi-annually
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIMEO (PBIS Platform) 	Quarterly or semi-annually
	Student demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age/grade level • Race/ethnicity • Socioeconomic status • Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School records 		Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter

Level	Evaluation Requirement	Data Needed	Data Source	Data-Collection Instrument (if applicable)	Timeline
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender 			
	Parent participation and satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Participation Rates • Degree of Parent satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Records (Team Meeting Summaries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent satisfaction survey 	Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter
<i>School</i>	Changes in student performance	State assessment results (percentage meeting state standards) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Math 	School Report Card		Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter
	Student progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance rates • Grade retention rates • Sp. Ed. eval. referral rates • Sp. Ed. placement rates • Disciplinary referrals • Graduation/drop-out rates 	School records		Year 1 (baseline); Annually thereafter

Level	Evaluation Requirement	Data Needed	Data Source	Data-Collection Instrument (if applicable)	Timeline
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions 	End-of-Year Report (ISBE)		Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter
	School demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Race/ethnicity ○ Socioeconomic status • No. w/ disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Race/ethnicity ○ Disability category ○ Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Report Card • School Report Card <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School records for FACTS data 		Annually
	LRE trends	LRE placements by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade • Disability 	School records for FACTS data		
	Treatment/implementation integrity	Teacher skills and knowledge application	Checklist based on observations	Critical components checklist	Year 1 (baseline) Quarterly thereafter

Level	Evaluation Requirement	Data Needed	Data Source	Data-Collection Instrument (if applicable)	Timeline
	Parent participation and satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of parent satisfaction • Parent participation rates 	School Records (Team Meeting Summaries)	Parent satisfaction survey	Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter
<i>District</i>	Student performance	State assessment results (percentage meeting state standards) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Math 	District Report Card		Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter
	Student progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special ed. exit rates • Drop-out rates • Graduation rates • Suspension and expulsion rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FACTS • LEA Profiles • LEA Profiles • LEA Profiles, End-of-Year Report 		Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter
	Student demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Report Card 		Year 1 (baseline)

Level	Evaluation Requirement	Data Needed	Data Source	Data-Collection Instrument (if applicable)	Timeline
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Race/ethnicity ○ Socioeconomic status ● Number w/disabilities ○ Race/ethnicity ○ Disability category ○ Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District Report Card ○ LEA Profile 		Annually thereafter
	LRE trends	LRE placements by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grade ● Disability 	LEA Profiles		Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter
	Compare demonstration school(s) to nondemonstration schools in the same district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State Assessment ● LRE ● Referral rates ● Placement rates ● Sp. Ed. exit rates ● Parent participation and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School Report Card ● School records for FACTS data ● Team Meeting Records ● Parent Satisfaction 	Parent Satisfaction Survey	Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter

Level	Evaluation Requirement	Data Needed	Data Source	Data-Collection Instrument (if applicable)	Timeline
		satisfaction	Survey		
Regional	Evaluate professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative: number and type of participants • Qualitative: Level of participant satisfaction; alignment w/state teaching standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration forms • CPDU evaluation forms • Observation of degree of implementation of knowledge/skills in classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical components checklist 	Quarterly
	Evaluate technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative: number and type of TA contacts • Qualitative: Level of participant satisfaction; alignment w/TA best practice; change in team- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA provider logs • Participant evaluation feedback • Degree of generalization of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA provider logs • Participant survey; • Critical components checklist for TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly • Quarterly • Quarterly

Level	Evaluation Requirement	Data Needed	Data Source	Data-Collection Instrument (if applicable)	Timeline
		ing and instruction skills	skills		
	Evaluate student outcomes across participating districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State assessment • LRE • Referral rates • Sp. Ed. placement rates • Sp. Ed. exit rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and District Report Cards • LEA profiles • Local records • Local records • Local records 		Year 1 (baseline) Annually thereafter
<i>IHE</i>	Extent to which RTI, scientific, research-based reading instruction, etc., are incorporated into preservice curricula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum survey • Review of syllabi from appropriate courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of department or program chairs of participating universities • Curriculum checklist 	• Survey/Curriculum checklist of targeted skills	Year 1 (baseline) Biennially thereafter
<i>Project</i>	Data analysis by region and overall	All regional data	Regional evaluator reports		Quarterly, annually, and at the end of the

Level	Evaluation Requirement	Data Needed	Data Source	Data-Collection Instrument (if applicable)	Timeline
					project
	Evaluate effectiveness of each RPDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative: number and type trainings and TA contacts; number of participants • Qualitative: Effect of trainings and TA; alignment w/state teaching standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration forms • CPDU evaluation forms; • Participant satisfaction survey results • Degree of generalization of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant evaluation survey • Critical components checklist 	Semi-annually, annually, and at the end of the project
	Evaluate effectiveness of project	All of the above will inform the evaluation of the project			Annually and at the end of the project