Support for Personalized Learning

Guidance for West Virginia Schools and Districts
April 2012
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2011-2012

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State Superintendent of Schools
West Virginia Department of Education
Dedicated to...

Meeting the personal needs of each student to achieve the promise of ALL CHILDREN LEARNING “good kids doing great work”
Foreword

Former President John F. Kennedy once said, “Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.”

The roots of my beliefs and values as an educator were shaped to align with this vision when I was a classroom teacher. In those early years, I came to understand that first and foremost, teaching is a very personal and human process. I can still picture the faces of my students, remember their joy and challenges and recall how hard I struggled to make a difference in their lives. It is an outgrowth of those early experiences and much of what I have learned since that led me to establish Personalized Learning as the first strategic priority.

At its core, personalization simply means placing individual student welfare at the core of everything we do. It means steadfastly influencing all those around us to do the same. Whether it is emphasizing the importance of caring relationships, knowing students’ academic and personal needs and strengths, or listening to and acting upon student voice, we can do many things to accelerate personalization through the strength of our leadership, the power of our words and the diligence of our actions. However, personalization also requires us to re-think many of the fundamental ways we deliver public education. Using the power of technology is but one example of how we can serve the personal needs of students in ways that I never dreamed possible as a new teacher.

We have more than 282,000 students in West Virginia, each with unique talents and abilities that deserve to be recognized and developed. To achieve the promise of all children learning, we must harness the power of technology and collective action to more effectively nurture the specific gifts of each child and personalize the learning process.

It is within the landscape of this vision that West Virginia’s Support for Personalized Learning (SPL) was conceptualized and collaboration across the West Virginia Department of Education was realized, leading to the creation of this guidance document. It is our belief that SPL is a viable course toward more “Good Kids Doing Great Work.”

Jorea M. Marple, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools
Some information in this document was adapted from The Student Assistance Team and the Three-Tier Model of Student Intervention: A Guidance and Resource Manual for New Mexico's Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework prepared by the New Mexico Public Education Department, Fall 2009; Response to Intervention (RTI) A Practitioner’s Guide to Implementation prepared by Colorado Department of Education, 2008; and Response To Intervention-Idaho: Connecting the Pieces, prepared by the Idaho State Department of Education, June 2009.

Notes:
- This guidance document is available at http://www.wvde.state.wv.us/spl.
- This guidance document incorporates and replaces the Department’s technical assistance manual, West Virginia Response to Intervention: An Implementation and Technical Assistance Guide For Districts and Schools, October 2006.
- Additional guidance on eligibility for specific learning disabilities may be found in Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Exceptional Students, WVDE, July 2012 and Specific Learning Disabilities Guidance for West Virginia Schools and Districts, WVDE, April 2012.
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Acknowledgements

The Support for Personalized Learning (SPL) described through this guidance document grew out of feedback provided by West Virginia educators across the state. Frank conversations and inclusive collaboration characterized the response made by a cross-office group from the West Virginia Department of Education to use feedback from the field to build a framework that districts would, in turn, use to strengthen the academic, social/emotional and behavioral support they offer to all students. The WVDE recognizes and appreciates the collective time, effort and passion that made this guidance evolve as a manifestation of our common ground and as a solid structure for carrying forward our dedication to improving education for all students through all levels of our system.
What is SPL about?

SPL is about...

• every student in WV being educated through a seamless system of high quality instruction that maximizes learning;
• understanding that solutions to needs are context specific;
• having rich conversations about students that put their performance into a personalized context;
• determining whether an identified need exists for one student, a small group of students, or a large group of students and using this knowledge to form the most appropriate instructional response;
• the individuals closest to each student, collecting pertinent data and actively participating in designing the most appropriate response;
• utilizing a problem-solving process to analyze possible reasons for a student’s academic and/or behavioral needs and providing the most effective configuration of support;
• envisioning and articulating viable expectations for every student;
• identifying and manipulating the variables that influence a student’s performance.

SPL needs to be as dynamic as students, changing in response to the needs of every individual.

As a process, SPL will broaden and add flexibility to the approach we will use to provide the most appropriate instruction for every student in West Virginia.

The success of SPL will result from all of us working together to define and responsively redefine what is needed, student by student.
Introduction

Purpose of SPL

The West Virginia Support for Personalized Learning (SPL) framework is a state-wide initiative that suggests flexible use of resources to provide relevant academic, social/emotional and/or behavioral support to enhance learning for all students. SPL is characterized by a seamless system of high quality instructional practices allowing all students to sustain significant progress, whether they are considered at-risk, exceeding grade-level expectations or at any point along the continuum.

Following issuance of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), West Virginia, in 2005, began to develop a Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Primarily functioning as a K-3 prevention and intervention model, RTI in WV emerged as a process for identifying and addressing students' needs prior to initiating the special education eligibility process for students suspected of having a specific learning disability. SPL embraces these purposes, but the intent of SPL is much more pervasive in scope. SPL operates with the understanding that student learning increases when the right supports are available and responsibly revised or removed as each student's learning advances and deepens. SPL also incorporates and builds on processes formerly implemented as RTI. Staff, parents and students collaboratively collecting and thoughtfully considering a relevant array of data as a means for determining the most appropriate instruction is a key element of SPL. Because SPL is intended to benefit all students, many dimensions of flexibility are built into this framework. Just as SPL, at its strongest will look different for each student, SPL for each district, school and classroom, at its strongest is expected to be customized.

Purpose of Document

The goal of this guidance document is to provide current information about how to support personalized learning. This information represents a collaborative approach as an effective and efficient means for maximizing the learning for ALL STUDENTS. Section II explains essential components of SPL and further defines the framework.

Section III outlines a process for implementing the SPL framework and shows how it becomes vital in a school setting. The essential components of SPL currently exist in every school in varying degrees of development. The SPL framework connects and coordinates these components, thereby extending their impact and their application to a broader population. It is the part of school improvement and reform that addresses the quality of instruction by closely attending and responding to the extent to which students are learning. It is the skeleton that gives strength to an array of systems and elements of the education process and ensures every student's progress is maximized.

This guidance document is an overview of SPL, one that is intended to serve as a resource for each local district and school to use as they customize the framework to align with their students and resources and to help them plan and provide professional development to communicate the purposes and processes of SPL. This document describes characteristics and components of a well-implemented SPL system. Specifically, it defines key components of SPL, makes suggestions for composition of building level problem-solving teams, and identifies roles for itinerant and support staff, as well as provides examples of processes that will assist teams in their ongoing student problem-solving meetings to productively plan collection of evidence of student learning. It also outlines the multi-levels through which student support can be provided as well as suggested guidelines for determining the need to provide a different level of support. Section IV of the guidance document provides examples of how SPL interfaces with existing programs historically focused on specific subsets of students.
Introduction

- English Language Learners
- Special Education
- 21st Century Community Learning Center Program
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Positive School Climate (PSC)
- Preschool
- Critical Skills
- Title I

In Section V answers are offered for frequently asked questions (FAQs). Sections VI, VII and VIII respectively provide a glossary of key terminology, relevant resources, references and trainings.

THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE of SPL is to enhance the success of all students across the full spectrum of academic, social/emotional and behavioral competencies.

Philosophy

Students are more likely to experience success academically, socially/emotionally and behaviorally, when school personnel make available a comprehensive configuration of supports and services to students. Through processes supported by SPL, all students access appropriate levels of support and instruction that align with their current levels of individual academic, social/emotional and behavioral development. SPL supports collaborative collection, analysis and response to student performance data. SPL also supports collective involvement to include classroom teachers, parent(s), students, principals and building and district specialists as needed.
Essential Components of SPL are consistent with West Virginia Standards for High Quality Schools. These concepts are provided to show the consistency with characteristics incorporated in SPL.

Standards:

1. Positive Climate and Cohesive Culture
2. School Leadership
3. Standards-Focused Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments
4. Student Support Services and Family/Community Connections
5. Educator Growth and Development
6. Efficient and Effective Management
7. Continuous Improvement

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) recognizes eight components essential to SPL implementation:

1. Leadership
2. School Climate and Culture
3. Teams and Processes
4. Family and Community Partnerships
5. Assessments
6. Core Instruction
7. Targeted Instruction
8. Intensive Instruction

Support for Personalized Learning employs a well integrated system of teams and processes.

Leadership

Leadership at the state, district and building level is crucial to SPL implementation. SPL is a significant change that affects the entire educational system. Initially, district level administrators must understand and embrace the essential components and supports needed to effectively implement SPL. Administrators must prioritize resource allocation to support the effort, as well as offer professional development to school staffs on the philosophical underpinnings of SPL. A common understanding of the SPL philosophy, achieved through local staff development, is imperative for successful implementation. Additionally, superintendents, curriculum directors, principals, Title 1 administrators, special education administrators and others must guide the implementation of SPL by developing leadership roles and expectations for district and building administrators. Because of the broad impact of SPL on the entire educational system, significant systemic changes will need to occur for successful implementation. These changes must be championed and monitored by leaders at all levels.

Given that professional development promotes change, district and school leadership should participate in trainings that develop knowledge of curriculum and instruction across the levels of support, positive school climate, the problem-solving process, progress monitoring and parent and community involvement. The WVDE has developed training modules in blended formats to support professional development across the state. Nonetheless, administrators’ participation in developing the infrastructure for SPL has a direct correlation to the success of the framework.

While supporting initial implementation of SPL should be an important focus for districts, establishing a long term commitment of resources and time is equally critical. Schools must devote time to implementation and maintenance of their customization of SPL to include time for data dialogues, for problem-solving team meetings and for development of an implementation plan that identifies
continued training needs. These elements need to be monitored and reviewed by district administration. District administration should work with principals to regularly monitor and review the implementation plans developed by individual schools and provide support systems, technology and training to collect, report, analyze and use data.

The parameters of each level need to be clearly defined at each district and school and may look different depending on resources, demographics and needs.

The success of SPL will be determined, to a great extent, by the degree to which district and school leaders are able to move the focus of SPL from philosophical understanding to actual practice. District and school leadership is imperative to the success of the framework.

School Climate and Culture

People in any healthy organization must have agreement on how to do things and what is worth doing. School culture is the reality of what organizational members care about, what they are willing to spend time doing, what and how they celebrate, and what they talk about. Therefore, a positive school culture provides the foundation on which all instruction occurs and all students are engaged in learning. The core principles of the SPL framework embrace the impact of school culture upon student learning, and support the process of self-assessment. Tools are available to classify the type of culture existing in a school. Towards the goal of creating more positive school cultures, SPL also encourages self-assessment of school climate. It acknowledges the value in identifying relative areas of strength and need within each school setting.

Positive school climate consists of three primary domains, each consisting of corresponding subdomains (in italics) as follows:

- **Engagement** – the quality of relationships, including respect for diversity among students, staff and families; the level of school participation and involvement by families, staff and students in school activities; and efforts by schools to connect with the larger community.
- **Safety** – the physical and emotional security of the school setting and school-related activities as perceived, experienced, and created by students, staff, families and the community. The use and trade of illicit substances in the school setting and during school-related activities also is included in this domain.
- **Environment** – the physical and mental health supports available that promote student wellness, the physical condition of school facilities, the academic environment, and the disciplinary tone of the school – i.e., the fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures.

Understanding these domains of a positive school climate is vital. However, equally important in maintaining a positive school climate is the development of systems to support school personnel in implementing identified research-based practices to improve student outcomes. Naturally, the identified practices to support student achievement and social competence are dependent on a clear understanding of the information and data available to decision makers.

SPL recognizes the following practices as positive supports to be established at the CORE level:

- Defining and consistently teaching expectations for the behavior and social interactions of students, parents and educators
- Acknowledging and recognizing students and adults for appropriate behaviors
- Engaging administrators, teachers and additional individuals as appropriate, in a collaborative problem-solving process of using data to design instruction and behavior intervention plans
- Ensuring behavioral and instructional errors are monitored, corrected or re-taught
- Engaging families with a culturally-sensitive, solution-focused approach to support student learning
Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Improving student academic and behavior outcomes is about ensuring all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions possible. PBIS provides an operational framework for achieving these outcomes. More importantly, PBIS is not a curriculum, intervention, or practice, but is a decision-making framework that guides selection, integration and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students. Examples of supportive systems include:

- Collaboration is supported and team decision-making occurs at multiple levels, including a leadership team, a problem-solving (intervention) team and instructional teams.
- Written documents describe policies and procedures.
- Resources are allocated at multiple levels of intervention and support.
- Professional development is ongoing and job-embedded.
- Data management system is in place including problem-solving (intervention) teams and instructional teams.

The research-based practices employed at the CORE level typically transition to more explicit strategies or systematic programs used at the TARGETED and INTENSIVE levels of SPL. Interventions through these levels address identified learning concerns that require increased supervision, customized or additional instruction to accomplish CORE standards.

Teams and Processes

A student(s) who is highly supported by a team of teachers collaborating routinely for his/her learning success is far more likely to succeed. Therefore, the areas of collaboration and communication are essential components to successful SPL implementation.

Researchers call schools that continuously work together to seek and share learning and to act on their learning, “communities of continuous inquiry and improvement,” communities of practice or professional learning communities (PLCs). Professional learning communities are built on and promote effective collaboration and communication. At the heart of a PLC “is a focus on and commitment to the learning of each student. A PLC is comprised of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all.” (Dufour, Dufour, Many, Eaker, 2006) Members of a PLC work together to examine the current reality of their practices and the best ways to improve teaching and learning and meet the goals of achievement levels of their students. The PLC members are committed to action and to putting into practice what they learn through the examination of student work as well as other types of evidence of student performance, drawn from multiple data sources. Through observation, analysis and discussion, PLCs work their way to common understandings and common goals. Common commitment to continuous improvement drives the collaborative teaming process through a focus on results.

The collaborative decision-making process leads to the development of customized instruction and authentic scaffolding with the highest probability of success for the greatest number of students. When the key concepts of SPL are understood and applied within the context.
of the entire district and school, goals are more likely to be accomplished. Successful implementation requires focused leadership and collaborative practices among general education, special education, Title I, speech-language, ELL and gifted educators. High functioning PLCs support common goals, combining resources, sharing knowledge and determining the most effective use of staff and other resources; all contributing to a high functioning system of support for personalized learning.

Types of Collaborative Teams
Several types of teams are found at schools that have direct involvement with the SPL process. The names of these teams are not as important as their responsibilities and membership listed in the chart on page 8. In small schools, the teams may be combined or have shared membership. Since SPL is a dynamic process in which procedures change, the members of a team may also change. Decisions about how teams are configured are made at the local level based on the current needs of the students in the school. However, each team meets often, regularly and for a sufficient amount of time to conduct the business of the team. In addition to a written schedule of meeting times and locations, agendas and minutes are maintained in a file by a person and in a place designated by the team. Core members consistently attend meetings and avoid interruptions. All collaborative teams affect change through four key elements: 1. Goals that are set and shared, 2. Indicators that measure success, Assistance from capable others, 3. Leadership that supports and pressures and 4. Settings that allow staff to get important things done. (Saunders and Ermeling, 2009)

The following is a list and brief description of the types of teams that may exist in a building:

School Leadership Team
The leadership team has a global view. They work to see and understand how purposes and processes interface and manifest across state, district, school and classroom levels. They make school-wide decisions and create consistency with regard to curriculum, assessment, testing administration and needed staff development. This team leads in building a collaborative culture and models trust and positive response to change.

Grade-Level Team
Teachers meeting within their grade-level collaborate to provide the highest quality, most relevant instruction possible, with a clear focus on student needs and standards being addressed. These teams are most often in place in elementary and middle schools. These teams should identify areas of need across their classes based on classroom/formative assessment data and set goals before they plan for the design and monitoring of instruction across the levels of support. As a horizontal team, they will have focused discussion on best practices and data interpretation that affects the students at their grade-level as well as a clear understanding of how grade-level results contribute to the school goals and actions. More specialized membership may be added to this type team as instructional decisions need to be made which add TARGETED and INTENSIVE instruction to students.

Content Area Team
Functioning in much the same way as a grade-level team, these team members support each other with regard to the subject matter they teach. These teams are most often in place at high schools, but some middle schools also have content area teams. It is important they include special educators and counselors who may have in-depth knowledge of students’ needs. Teachers within subject areas mentor new teachers and guide them in aligning curriculum content with State standards, prioritizing and customizing instruction to meet students’ needs. More specialized membership may be added to this type team as instructional decisions need to be made which add TARGETED and INTENSIVE instruction to students.

Instruction Team
This team may have members, who also have a role in other school collaborative teams, or the more specialized members of this team may support the grade level or
content area teams as instructional decisions are made to add TARGETED or INTENSIVE instruction to students. Its membership is varied and broad, including a core membership of teachers and professional staff with roles and expertise to provide critical input to the process. The focus of this team is the daily work of student achievement and outcomes, rather than special education eligibility. Members monitor the process of leveled instruction and review data to make collaborative decisions including referral to the multidisciplinary team. They have assigned roles that may vary throughout the year. Team meetings include additional participants who have pertinent information about the topic, small group need or individual student being discussed. This team can include a parent, speech-language pathologist, gifted teacher, ELL teacher or Title I teacher. The team maintains an atmosphere in which a grade-level team or referring teacher feels welcomed and supported. (See WVBE Policy 2510)

Student Assistance Team

According to WV Policy 2510, Assuring the Quality of Education, each public school must establish a student assistance team (SAT). The SAT is required to:

• receive training in referral procedures for multidisciplinary evaluations, alternative education placements, disciplinary procedures and other school processes as appropriate for ensuring student progress and maintenance of a safe school environment;

• collect and maintain data on the activities of the team, including dates of meetings and the results of its recommendations;

• conduct the problem-solving process that includes designing and monitoring implementation of interventions and/or reviewing interventions designed by other school teams;

• receive and process written referrals from outside sources suspecting a student may need special education, including referrals and requests for initial evaluations made by parents; and

• initiate initial evaluation for special education and related services for students, when warranted based on the outcome of interventions.

A parent or any other interested person or agency may refer a student who is suspected of needing special education and related services. Referrals received from an outside source are forwarded to the SAT at the student’s school for consideration.

The district must review and process these written referrals in accordance with the SAT process described in Section 3.B. of Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities. For preschool age children or home-schooled students, the referral is received and processed directly by the special education director or designee. The special education director or designee must process referrals for private school students as well. Each district is responsible for locating, identifying and evaluating all students suspected of needing special education services who are enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary and secondary schools located in the school district.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team

This team is a group of qualified personnel representing a variety of disciplines which determines the areas to be evaluated and conducts the multidisciplinary evaluation. The team’s primary focus is to confirm that comprehensive procedures are used to determine whether a student is exceptional and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the student needs. These procedures are used selectively with individual students and do not include basic tests administered to or procedures used with all students in a school, grade or class. The student assistance team can serve as the multidisciplinary evaluation team if membership meets the requirements. (See WVBE Policy 2419)
### Table: Examples of School Collaborative Problem-Solving Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Teams</th>
<th>Suggested Membership</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Leadership Team</td>
<td>Principal, Grade-level facilitator, Specialist leader, Instructional Coach, Counselor, Content area facilitator</td>
<td>• Articulate school goals and keep the school on course</td>
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<td>• Determine staff development needs and resources</td>
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<td>• Decide on appropriate instructional and testing materials</td>
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<td>• Monitor best practice implementation review school/grade data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Define multi-level development and implementation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate within and among teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade-Level Team/Collaborative Team</td>
<td>Grade-level teachers, Instructional Coach, Specialist reps (SLP, ESL, Title I, Special Ed, Gifted) as necessary, Instructional Aides</td>
<td>• Plan lessons</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Collect and analyze data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Share resources and instructional methodologies</td>
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<td>• Decide and plan how to differentiate instruction</td>
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<td>• Define multi-level development and implementation in the grade</td>
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<td>• Implement a decision-making process</td>
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<td>• Communicate within and among teams</td>
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<td>• Ensure consistency of effective instructional practices and share resources and instructional methodologies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provide assistance/support to other teachers</td>
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<td>• Analyze student data</td>
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<td>• Develop standard instruction protocols that support the needs of all students</td>
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<td>• Conduct individual student problem-solving</td>
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<td>• Provide coaching, resource materials, mentoring to staff</td>
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<td>• Assign and monitor team roles and responsibilities</td>
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<td>• Interact with parents and community resources</td>
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<td>• Train new teachers in the SPL process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Area Team/Collaborative Team</td>
<td>Subject area teachers (i.e., math, English/language arts, science), Instructional Coach, Special educator, Counselor, School Psychologist, Administrator</td>
<td>• Receive training in referral procedures for multidisciplinary evaluations, alternative education placements, disciplinary procedures and other school processes as appropriate for ensuring student progress and maintenance of a safe school environment</td>
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<td>• Collect and maintain data on the activities of the team, including dates of meetings and the results of its recommendations</td>
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<td>• Conduct the problem-solving process that includes designing and monitoring implementation of interventions and/or reviewing interventions designed by other school teams</td>
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<td>• Receive and process written referrals from outside sources</td>
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<td>• Receive referrals from outside sources and requests for initial evaluations made by parents</td>
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<td>• Initiate initial evaluation for special education and related services for students, when warranted based on the outcome of interventions</td>
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<td>• Communicate within and among teams</td>
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<td>Instruction Team/Collaborative Team</td>
<td>Principal, Instructional Coach, Grade-level facilitator (s), Specialist reps (SLP, ESL, Title I, Special Ed, Gifted) as necessary, Counselor, School Psychologist, Parent</td>
<td>• Review and consider requests for special education evaluation</td>
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<td>• Evaluate student eligibility for special education</td>
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<td>• Ensure adherence to state policies, federal guidelines and documentation</td>
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<td>• Interact with community resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Communicate within and among teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Assistance Team</td>
<td>Principal, School Psychologist, Grade-level teacher(s), Special educator, Speech-Language Pathologist, Parent</td>
<td>• Implement and Monitor the Plan</td>
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<td>• Evaluate and Adjust the Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team</td>
<td>Principal, School Psychologist, Special educator(s), Speech-Language Pathologist, Grade-level/Content teacher, Parent, Occupational/Physical therapist</td>
<td>• Review and consider requests for special education evaluation</td>
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</table>

### Problem-Solving Process

The school must establish a process for examining screening data, analyzing causes for limited response to CORE instruction, developing instruction to increase student achievement and ensuring all students are learning. The process of decision-making is the same regardless of examining groups of students or an individual student. The more efficient use of time and resources is found when the process is utilized to benefit groups of students. The SPL team members will have various roles in this process. It is a continuous cycle of examining data and modifying and adjusting for student needs. This collaborative learning cycle results in curriculum decisions, scheduling of instruction, student grouping and allocation of resources. Five steps in the process have been identified, which will be further explained in Section III. The steps are as follows:

- Identify and Define Needs
- Analyze the Problem
- Develop a Plan
- Implement and Monitor the Plan
- Evaluate and Adjust the Plan
Family and Community Partnerships

When families, schools and communities work together, children are more successful and schools improve. Effective partnerships include parents, families, students, community members and educators.

Indicators of an effective partnership include:
1) sharing information;
2) problem-solving; and
3) celebrating student challenges and successes.

Central to effective partnership is the recognition of shared responsibility and shared ownership of student challenges and successes. An effective educational partnership that includes parents, families, students and community members is necessary to increase success of students and schools. True collaboration must include parents and families in the educational experience. Parents have information and expertise with regard to their children beyond what schools will know. They are able to share history and significant events that have occurred in the life of the child or family. Parent involvement in the multi-leveled framework of SPL is characterized by meaningful two-way communication. Schools must empower parents and families as equal partners in support of their children’s learning, informing them of intervention options for their children before they are implemented. Given it may be a new experience for parents or guardians to be involved in planning customized instruction and progress monitoring, special care must be taken to inform them about the steps in the process to ensure engagement. Understanding and respect for cultural differences is vital when engaging families and fostering community support and should be taken into account in customized plans. Schools need to recognize that cultural understanding requires more than just awareness.

The school must provide written information to the parents addressing the concerns and needs of their student(s). At the CORE level, parent involvement in school decision-making leads to a more positive school climate. At the TARGETED and INTENSIVE levels, parent expertise regarding the individual student is vital and some portions of the intervention may take place at home. Members of the student’s family may provide information about the student’s functions in a variety of settings and strategies that will lead to improved student outcomes.

Parent involvement in any process affecting student performance is not only best practice but also a requirement under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and IDEA 2004. Parent-teacher conferences provide educators an opportunity to further explain SPL components, goals and individual student progress monitoring results. Parents must be notified of student progress within the SPL system on a regular basis. The written information should explain the system and communicate the vital and collaborative role parents play within SPL. It must be clearly communicated that the framework is not intended to delay referral for special education, but in fact, it addresses needs earlier in an attempt to prevent a learning gap from widening. When a student fails to respond to interventions and the team decision is made for referral to consider special education eligibility, written consent must be obtained in accordance with special education procedures. The more parents are actively involved at all levels, the greater the opportunity for student success.

Community engagement with schools and SPL in particular can take various forms. Local schools should seek resources within the community to reinforce the multi-level system during or after the regular school day and to add skilled assistance with interventions. Programs can be designed to provide academic enrichment opportunities, art, music, recreation, sports, drug and violence prevention and youth activities to students during non-school hours. These programs also offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for educational development. Local businesses can engage in activities to support schools through volunteers, special presentations, awards and recognition. Companies and corporations often have foundations that provide funds for parent-teacher organizations to host special activities at the school level. The old adage, “it takes a village to raise a child,” can truly be realized by using all available resources and educating parents and community members about SPL implementation.
Essential Components of SPL

Assessments

A major feature of SPL is its use of data to drive the decision-making process at the individual student, classroom and school levels. To support SPL's fluid approach, reliable and ongoing information must be available to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of instruction at different levels, of the system (e.g., classroom, school, district);
- design and responsively redesign instruction to support learning for all students;
- identify academic, social/emotional and/or behavioral needs of individual students;
- inform the problem-solving process.

SPL acknowledges that an efficient assessment system is highly advantageous. Assessment must function in support of learning, not as a replacement for instruction. Students' time is at a premium. With these factors in mind, SPL is in support of using data from a multitude of sources. Using a system of assessments that increases in frequency and intensity as evidence of insufficient student growth progressively accumulates is also supported.

SPL recognizes five main objectives of an effective assessment plan:

1. to identify, at the beginning of each year, whether a student's instructional needs can be met through: only CORE instruction, enhanced CORE instruction or scaffolded CORE instruction;
2. to monitor students' performance during the year for the purpose of identifying students who may be falling behind or who may need additional challenges;
3. to adjust instruction in ways that ensure continuous learning for all students;
4. to evaluate whether support provided is powerful enough to help all students achieve grade-level standards by the end of each year; and
5. to ensure instruction provided to students who are performing beyond State-approved grade-level standards is robust and rigorous enough to keep them learning.

SPL embraces five types of assessment that can contribute to productive decision making for student learning thereby maximizing accomplishment: (1) screening/interim; (2) formative/classroom assessment; (3) progress monitoring; (4) diagnostic assessment; and (5) summative assessment.

Screening/Interim Assessments

Screening and interim assessments function within SPL to identify students who have not been identified through other means but are performing below State-approved grade-level standards or are exceeding State-approved grade-level expectations. Results can be used as a starting point for adjusting instruction or as an indication of need for further evaluation. Screening instruments will typically vary across programmatic levels since existing data sources vary greatly as progression is made up through the grades. Examples of possible sources for screening data include: WESTEST 2, Acuity, DIBELS Next, grades, AIMSWEB, STAR, SRI, ODYSSEY, MAP, ACT EXPLORE among others. Districts will be expected to determine screening assessments that are efficient and appropriate for use with students at each programmatic level.

Formative/Classroom Assessments

Formative or classroom assessments function within SPL to identify misconceptions still held after instruction, to recognize patterns among students as well as to identify students who perform at each end of the class range; thereby signaling the possible need for instructional adjustment. As with screening, appropriate types of classroom assessment will be expected to vary across programmatic levels as well as across content areas to be developmentally-appropriate and embedded within instruction to the greatest degree possible. In contrast to all other types of assessment, formative/classroom assessment is ongoing and addresses students' immediate learning needs. Examples could include performance tasks, informal observation notes regarding student participation in discussions, review of work samples, among others. This level of assessment goes beyond evaluating to helping students learn what they need to learn to sustain growth. It can be used to clarify learning goals and the position of each student relative to these goals.
Progress Monitoring Assessments

Progress monitoring assessments function within SPL as a gauge of smaller increments or subsets of student performance and to bring forward the need for conversation about instruction for groups of students or for individuals. Assessments in this category most typically target evidence of progress relative to specific, high priority skills and processes. Data in this category could come from Acuity testlets or probes, DIBELS Next, West Virginia Writes, as well as other assessments. Progress monitoring assessment results can be used to adjust scaffolding, instructional pacing and presentation, as well as contribute to a collection of data used to make decisions about most appropriate instruction and placement for individual students.

Diagnostic Assessments

This type of assessment typically focuses on skills or abilities/processing/functions that underlie targeted skills or behaviors. The major purpose of diagnostic assessments is to provide information for planning more effective instruction. Diagnostic assessments, due to their time intensive nature, should be given when it is clear that they will offer new or more reliable information about a child’s academic, social/emotional or behavioral needs and used to help plan more powerful instruction. If data drawn from other assessments shows a pattern of insufficient response to instruction, further assessments may be administered to identify the specific area(s) of need. Likewise, the kinds of information diagnostic assessments can provide may be needed when a data pattern indicates instruction is not challenging a student. Many diagnostic tests are available, so each local school will need to choose the diagnostic assessments it will use when the need arises. The earlier an issue is detected, the greater the likelihood of change for the student.

Summative Assessments

Given at the end of the year, summative assessments are frequently group-administered tests of important outcomes (e.g., WESTEST 2). Summative assessments have a history of use for school, district and or state reporting purposes. Data from these assessments can provide feedback about the overall effectiveness of the instructional program. Within SPL, it is essential that staff at all levels understand these data. It must be clear that these assessments take a snapshot of broad abilities relative to grade- level content standards at one moment in time. These large scale assessments are designed to reveal patterns and provide feedback about the system.

“Large scale assessments are designed to give the system feedback so the system can learn; classroom assessment is designed to give individuals feedback so the individual can learn.”

(Anne Davies)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Students Assessed</th>
<th>Main Purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Screening/Interim     | • Beginning of school year                   | • All students                             | • Helps teachers differentiate instruction based upon student performance  
|                       | • Middle of school year                     | • As needs indicate                        | • Helps determine instructional groups  
|                       | • End of school year                        | • As needs indicate                        | • Helps determine if students are making adequate progress through current instruction and the need to change instruction  
|                       |                                             |                                            | • Helps determine risk status of individual students  
|                       |                                             |                                            | • Indicates a need to dig deeper                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Formative/Classroom   | Ongoing                                     | • All students                             | • Helps determine if students are making adequate progress through current instruction and the need to change instruction  
|                       |                                             |                                            | • Helps teachers differentiate instruction by relevant content, process and product  
|                       |                                             |                                            | • Helps teachers adjust degree and type of scaffolding with a gradual release of responsibility  
|                       |                                             |                                            | • Help students determine rate of growth                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Progress Monitoring   | Determined by risk status                   | Students in TARGETED and INTENSIVE Instruction | • Helps determine if students are making progress toward specific skills, processes or understandings  
|                       |                                             |                                            | • Informs school-wide action plans                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Diagnostic            | As needed                                   | Selected students (when more information is needed for program planning) | • Helps teachers adjust degree and type of scaffolding with a gradual release of responsibility  
|                       |                                             |                                            | • Helps teachers differentiate instruction by relevant content, process and product                                                                                                                                |
| Summative             | End of school year or end of course         | All students                               | • Gives school leaders and teachers feedback about the overall effectiveness of their programs  
|                       |                                             |                                            | • Informs school-wide action plans  
|                       |                                             |                                            | • Provides a longitudinal view of curricular strengths and weaknesses                                                                                                                                     |
The 3 Level Framework applies to academic and behavior skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A few students need INTENSIVE support in addition to the CORE instruction to learn.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students need intermittent additional support in addition to quality CORE instruction.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The majority of students respond to high-quality, standards-based CORE instruction that is differentiated and delivered with relevant scaffolding.</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Curriculum and Instruction**

*SPL is a system of support designed to meet the needs of ALL students ranging from those exceeding State-approved grade-level standards to those not meeting grade-level standards. Curriculum based on the State standards and high quality instruction are essential for maximizing student success. SPL is a framework for suggested best practice and supports collaborative decision-making as a process for meeting an individual student’s needs by providing a full configuration of support: CORE, TARGETED, INTENSIVE and SPECIAL EDUCATION. This guidance document defines the kinds of support that can be configured to meet the needs of individual students.*
Essential Components of SPL

CORE Instruction

High quality CORE instruction is the foundation of SPL. It is characterized by high expectations for all students and takes place in an academic environment that is safe, challenging, engaging and allows students to take academic risks without fear of failure. All students need access to high quality CORE instruction. Quality instruction at the CORE level requires a focus of personnel and resources as indicated by students’ needs. Due to the fluctuating nature of needs across and within districts, schools and classrooms, it is essential that the individuals who are most aware of the needs participate in decisions made to allocate personnel and material resources. SPL affirms the premise that high-quality CORE instruction averts the need for unnecessary intervention and supports, and meets the needs of at least 80% of the students. Quality instruction at the CORE level incorporates relevant formative assessment, differentiation and scaffolding as basic practices in all lessons, as well as provides significant opportunities for authentic application of content and skills in and across all disciplines. It requires responsive teaching, teacher modeling, guided instruction, productive group work and independent learning. Content goals in the CORE come directly from the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives.

Students need to know why they are doing what they are doing. The effective teacher makes learning relevant and meaningful through focus on a topic of study and/or text that is educationally meaningful and relevant to the students’ cultures, interests and overall educational goals. Teachers will accomplish this best when they organize around inquiry. Students explore one or more essential question(s) relevant to their lives, which engage and motivate them to want to learn. These are the essential components of short-term and lifelong learning.

CORE Instruction – English Language Arts

SPL recognizes the value in utilizing the 8 Essential Instructional Moves to support students’ access to text.

1. Teacher provides little introduction so as not to simplify the topic or text or rob students of discovering things for themselves.

2. Students directly engage and grapple with the topic or text without teacher intervention to make their own meaning and draw initial conclusions. This move typically involves reading and/or rereading which improves comprehension and supports creative thinking.

3. Teacher reads text aloud or demonstrates content or skills. Research shows that teachers reading aloud improves fluency and builds vocabulary. Like modeling thought processes and problem-solving in all subject areas, teachers reading aloud smoothes out comprehension bumps and extends student access to challenging texts.

4. Students translate texts and observations into their own words. Research shows asking students to write about what they read or observe strengthens their comprehension of texts and understanding of content.

5. Teacher asks a series of text-dependent, data-based or problem-based questions. These questions serve as scaffolding, and they sustain focus on specific, detailed evidence to support students’ opinions.

6. Students write a narrative, informative or argumentative piece that is grounded in detailed, evidence-based support from the text, experiment or problem.

7. Students and/or teacher use Instructional Moves 1-6 to determine question(s) to research and investigate through shared inquiry and collaboration. Background knowledge of the topic or text is expanded through this research investigation.

8. Students demonstrate their understanding by creating a product and presenting it to an audience. This real-world application supports ongoing engagement and deeper understanding, and promotes the development of communication skills.

SPL Supports Vocabulary Development

The importance of students acquiring a rich and varied vocabulary cannot be overstated. Research conducted in the past ten years reveals that vocabulary knowledge is the single most important factor contributing to reading comprehension. The effective vocabulary teacher builds a word-rich environment in which students are immersed in words for both incidental and intentional learning. Students need plenty of opportunities to use and respond
to the words they learn through playful and informal talk, discussion, reading or being read to and responding to what is read. The teacher also makes deliberate plans to incorporate words in listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabularies. As students are exposed to and interact with language throughout their school careers, they are able to build understanding of word meanings, acquire awareness of the workings of language and apply their knowledge to comprehend and produce language.

**SPL Supports Attention to Text Complexity**

The ability to independently read complex text is the key indicator for college and career readiness. In a climate where the demands of college, careers and citizenship have either held steady or increased, K-12 texts have trended downward in difficulty and instructional practices have inadequately fostered independent reading of complex texts, particularly informational texts. Consequently, too many students are reading at a level that is compromising their learning and perpetuating the knowledge gap. SPL supports a stronger emphasis on scaffolding instruction in ways that increase all students’ access to challenging texts.

**Table: Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Lexile Ranges in Lexile Measures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards</th>
<th>Lexile Ranges Aligned to College and Career Readiness Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>450-790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>770-980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>955-1155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>1080-1305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-College Career Readiness</td>
<td>1215-1355</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPL Supports an Increase in Focus on Informational Text**

The majority of texts that students have to read in college and in the work place are informational in nature while K-12 instruction has focused primarily on literary text. Therefore, SPL supports the following proportions in alignment with NAEP and SMARTER Balanced Assessment: Beginning in the elementary grades with a 50% literary and 50% informational ratio, moving to 45% literary and 55% informational at the middle level and 30% literary with 70% informational at the high school level. These percentages represent reading during the entire instructional day, not just in the English Language Arts class.

**Table: Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages by Grade in the 2009 NAEP Reading Framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Literary Text</th>
<th>Informational Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Levels</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPL Supports an Increase in Informative and Argumentative Writing**

Most of the writing students are expected to produce in college and in the work place is informative, argumentative and grounded in solid evidence. However, K-12 instruction has traditionally focused on narrative, informative, descriptive and persuasive writing. Therefore, SPL supports the following proportions in alignment with NAEP and SMARTER Balanced Assessment: Beginning in the elementary grades with 30% opinion (argumentative) 35% informative and 35% narrative, moving to 35% argumentative 35% informative and 30% narrative at the middle level, and 40% argumentative 40% informative and 20% narrative at the high school level.

**Table: Distribution of Communicative Purposes by Grade in the 2011 NAEP Writing Framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>To Persuade</th>
<th>To Explain</th>
<th>To Convey Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Level</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidance for West Virginia Schools and Districts

Teaching and Learning the Conventions of Standard English

Development of Grammatical Knowledge - SPL supports recursive, ongoing development of grammatical knowledge by promoting the return to certain important language topics in higher grades at greater levels of sophistication. Students must have a strong command of standard English to succeed academically and professionally across the disciplines. SPL encourages instruction that makes students aware of language variety.

Teaching about the grammatical patterns found in specific disciplines helps reading comprehension in general and reading comprehension in history classrooms in particular. Students can use the understanding of English grammar and usage to make more purposeful and effective choices in their writing and speaking and more accurate and rich interpretations in their reading and listening.

Development of Foundational Skills

If literacy levels are to improve, especially in the earliest grades, classroom instruction must include oral language in a purposeful, systematic way because it helps students master the printed word. Besides having intrinsic value as modes of communication, listening and speaking are necessary prerequisites of reading and writing.

SPL acknowledges the importance of robust instruction of speaking and listening in K-3 by offering an extensive number of read-alouds appropriate in complexity. It is particularly important that students in the earliest grades build knowledge through being read to as well as through reading, with the balance gradually shifting to reading independently. By reading a story or nonfiction selection aloud, teachers allow students to experience written language without the burden of decoding, granting them access to content that they may not be able to read and understand by themselves. Attention to a developmentally-appropriate balance of independent reading and listening to read-alouds is supported by SPL as a means for increasing student engagement and behavior most conducive to learning.

Shared Responsibility for Students’ Literacy Development

Although the NxG ELA standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening and Language for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout this document. For example, the Writing standard requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, the Speaking and Listening standard sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research. Research and media skills are blended into the Standards as a whole.

To be ready for college, workforce training and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new.

CORE Assessments – English Language Arts

Assessment is an important component of CORE instruction, as well. A variety of assessments are used to guide instruction. Each objective need not be a separate focus for instruction and assessment.

SPL supports the need for all schools to have a process for reviewing all students’ progress through district-level and building-level screening. The WV SPL framework suggests some type of universal screening for all students at the beginning of the school year to determine each student’s current level of performance. Currently, Lexile measures in grades 3-8 and 11 are available with
Guidance for West Virginia Schools and Districts

WESTEST 2 results. Screening measures are diverse, brief, can be informal and provide an initial indication of which students are entering the school year at-risk for academic difficulties or who have exceeded benchmarks and need a challenge. Valid and reliable screening can help teachers differentiate their instruction based on what students already know and can do. Teachers, administrators and building teams reviewing screening and progress monitoring data utilize a systematic process of discussing data so that effective adjustments to instruction can be made.

SPL affirms the value of relevant assessments, in driving instruction and necessary scaffolding. Careful consideration should be given to getting at the root cause(s) and designing instruction to align with the type of need. There are many assessments and diagnostic tools available and of value, but classroom formative assessment processes allow teachers to adjust classroom instruction by scaffolding immediately to meet students’ needs. The relevancy of the data used to drive instruction and scaffolding is a key consideration. Formative assessment strategies such as observations, checklists, rubrics, student work samples and student self-assessments furnish the teacher with valuable information and data, resulting in improved educational experiences for the student. SPL supports the use of performance tasks within instruction and as a means of demonstrating mastery of concepts and skills.

**CORE Instruction – Mathematics**

Quality core instruction in mathematics is a component of SPL. Classroom instruction is based on currently-adopted West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives. These objectives provide a focused, rigorous set of standards that connect the mathematics within and across grade levels. Classroom teachers use the content objectives and the Standards for Mathematical Practice to design engaging, developmentally appropriate, inquiry-based instruction that develops a deep conceptual understanding of mathematical concepts alongside procedural skills and fluency. There are three components of fluency as it relates to mathematics: accuracy, efficiency and flexibility. (Adding It Up: Helping Children Learn Mathematics, 2001)

The following fluencies are defined within the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Add/subtract within 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>Add/subtract within 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
<td>Add/subtract within 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Add/subtract with 100 (pencil and paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>Multiply/divide within 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Add/subtract within 1000 (pencil and paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>Add/subtract with 1,000,000 (pencil and paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>Multi-digit multiplication (pencil and paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Grade</td>
<td>Multi-digit division (pencil and paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-digit decimal operations (pencil and paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Grade</td>
<td>Solve px + q = r, p(x+q)=r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>Solve simple 2 x 2 systems by inspection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mathematics CORE instruction engages the students in learning by connecting new concepts to prior learning. The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe students’ interaction with grade level mathematics. These practices also provide the teacher with a framework for supporting literacy. Mathematical discourse is used to develop students’ understanding of the mathematical concepts; as well as, by the teacher to gain insight in the students’ level of understanding. A variety of flexible grouping structures is used to differentiate instruction based on the needs of individual students or the demands of the lesson. These groups may include whole group, small group or individual instruction.

**SPL recognizes the value in utilizing the Standards for Mathematical Practice**

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.
CORE Assessments - Mathematics

Information on student understanding of mathematical concepts should be used to guide instruction. What does a student Know, Understand and have the ability to Do? Available data sources should be used first to guide instruction. Additional sources should be used only if needed data is not available. The WV SPL format suggests some type of universal screening for all students at the beginning of the school year. This screening should be brief and focus on important mathematical concepts that form the foundation for the year’s instruction. Formative assessment processes should be used by the classroom teacher to adjust classroom instruction by scaffolding immediately to meet student needs. In mathematics, it is vital that the classroom teacher have the student explain their mathematical thinking either in writing or orally. It is possible, for a student to have a correct answer, but have an incorrect understanding of the concept.

CORE Assessments - Behavior

All schools must respond quickly and consistently to any behavior that disrupts the learning environment in a manner that deters future incidents and affirms respect for individuals. For behavior, the classroom teacher applies firm, fair, corrective responses to problem behaviors. In addition, the teacher:

- Collects and analyzes evidence of mastery of student’s goals
- Participates in the review of student behavior plans, if appropriate

SPL supports the practice of basing instructional decisions, in all disciplines, on more than one assessment, and affirms the need expressed by teachers and administrators to create an appropriate balance to ensure teachers have time to teach and students have time to practice.

TARGETED INSTRUCTION

TARGETED Support – English Language Arts

TARGETED instruction and more intense scaffolding are triggered when a student’s progress in the general classroom environment, despite strong commitment and high quality instruction at the CORE level, slows to below State-approved grade-level standards or exceeds those grade-level standards. It differs from quality CORE instruction because of increased scaffolding, time, assessment and expertise. In the TARGETED level, students receive instruction on the currently-adopted content standards and objectives. TARGETED instruction in English Language Arts includes significant opportunities for authentic reading, writing, language, speaking, listening and problem solving. As with CORE instruction, all TARGETED lessons incorporate the principles of differentiated instruction. TARGETED instruction typically occurs within the general classroom environment. SPL supports the assumption that TARGETED instruction and scaffolding occur using relevant content, including science, mathematics, ELA, social studies and electives, including CTE and arts courses. SPL supports the occurrence of TARGETED instruction before, during and after school and the need for ongoing consideration of how resources are used to support extended school day and year. It is not considered appropriate for supplemental instruction to take place during lunch, recess, extracurricular activities or
replace other courses such as art, music, science, social studies or any other curricular offerings. Collaboration is a key component to making TARGETED instruction effective and meaningful.

For TARGETED instruction, the teacher creates flexible small groups of similarly-skilled/needs-alike students, allowing the teacher to give increased attention to each student, and to provide feedback and scaffolding within the context of collaborative peer learning experiences. Technology is embedded in teaching and learning, but is not used to replace the teacher or authentic, relevant instruction. TARGETED instruction supplements CORE instruction and usually occurs three to five times per week for fifteen to thirty minutes (see chart on page 23). Those qualified to teach at the TARGETED level include classroom teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, Title I teachers, reading specialists, related service providers and other qualified content area professionals.

During the active phase of a lesson, the teacher provides TARGETED interventions by working with guided groups in a variety of ways. TARGETED instruction might mean, simply meeting with the group for additional time during rotation. In small group guided instruction, content, process and/or product are differentiated to meet the learning goals of the students. In designing TARGETED support, it is also important that careful consideration be given to determine if a student “can’t do” or “won’t do,” since the instruction is very different. Students who do not respond to TARGETED instruction in the CORE classroom are assessed more frequently in order to gauge the effectiveness of instruction and to inform adjustment of the instruction/intervention provided.

TARGETED instruction may include accommodations. These accommodations would not be expected to affect what students learn, only how they learn it. TARGETED instruction uses formative assessment processes for continuous feedback between student and teacher, peer interaction to scaffold student understanding, explicit instruction that emphasizes skill building and contextualized instruction that emphasizes application of skills. Teachers differentiate, scaffold and use multi-modal strategies to engage students during TARGETED instruction. This is not the place for worksheet or textbook driven, “drill and kill” instruction.

TARGETED Assessment – English Language Arts

Assessment is more focused at the TARGETED level. It is based on specific students’ needs, and results of the assessment and collaborative decisions about the most appropriate instruction. Once TARGETED instruction is in place, student response to instruction is monitored on a regular basis. If needs are difficult to identify, a diagnostic assessment (whether formal or informal) may be necessary to determine the focus of the intervention. When selecting assessments at the TARGETED level, the focus is on identifying the specific understandings and/or skills needing support and on discerning the most effective means for meeting a student’s needs. Discussions about student progress at the TARGETED level may or may not take place formally in problem-solving team meetings, based on a student’s progress. Informal consideration and reflection occur as an ongoing process.

Teachers document TARGETED instruction matched to specific student needs as part of the process of determining what is most effective. TARGETED instruction continues until student needs can be met exclusively by CORE instruction or a team decision is made to move to INTENSIVE level support. Therefore, the duration of TARGETED instruction will vary. Insufficient progress despite sustained, relevant, high quality instruction may warrant the initiation of INTENSIVE level support. Decisions to increase the level of support are made through data-driven dialogue conducted by the problem-solving team. Data derived from a single assessment is not considered adequate evidence for recommending INTENSIVE level support. The assessment system should be balanced by type and needs to vary from student to student.

TARGETED Support – Mathematics

TARGETED instruction is designed to be delivered within the general classroom environment during the time allocations for mathematics. Students who are exceeding State-approved grade-level standards or who are having difficulty meeting grade-level standards may benefit from TARGETED support. Students are identified for TARGETED support based on evidence assembled during CORE instruction and from CORE assessments. This evidence should be gathered from multiple sources over time and assembled in a portfolio.
TARGETED instruction will be provided by the teacher in flexible small groups of students who have similar needs. Small groups will meet regularly for targeted instruction. These sessions are long enough for the students to interact with the identified mathematics concepts. A student’s continued participation in TARGETED small group instruction is determined by the student’s needs and level of success. Instruction is designed to support grade-level standards. Learning progressions within the standards and objectives may provide guidance for the teacher as he/she plans for TARGETED instruction.

Instruction may include the extension of learning or more intense scaffolding based on student need. The TARGETED instruction should actively engage students in mathematics with a focus on extending the learning of students through more complex project-based learning tasks or through learning tasks that focus on gaps within the learning progressions. TARGETED instruction should focus on the development of mathematical understanding of the identified concepts.

TARGETED Assessment - Mathematics

Formative assessment processes should be used by the teacher throughout TARGETED instruction. Classroom teachers use this information to adjust instruction within the flexible groups. Progress monitoring is systematically embedded within the TARGETED instruction. Assessment tools within TARGETED support should balance between assessing conceptual understanding of mathematical concepts and procedures. Evidence of student learning comes from multiple sources and is assembled in a portfolio. Classroom teachers interact regularly with students to verify their understanding of the mathematical concepts. The evidence or data collected is used to make informed decisions as to the kind and level of support needed by the students to obtain mastery of grade level content standards and objectives. Does the student need to continue with TARGETED instruction? Does the student need INTENSIVE support?

TARGETED Support – Behavior

TARGETED support is provided for some students who need short-term support to address initial displays of difficulty with behavior. Targeted instruction for behavior may take place within any school settings. In the general education classroom, the teacher may modify and change environmental conditions. Or, the student may leave the classroom and be engaged in a small group setting for counseling and behavior management sessions. TARGETED instruction may happen during the regular school day or during extended day/year opportunities. TARGETED instructional supports may include:

- Providing whole group interventions within the general education classroom
- Affording students small group interventions and instruction to address such issues as anger, social skills, substance abuse
- Offering self-management training and support
- Arranging for parent training and collaboration
- Developing behavior contracts
- Referring students to a mental health agency
- Reconvening the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 Team
- Placing a student in another teacher’s classroom
- Supporting mentor programs to provide connections with caring adults that support positive behavior

Ultimately, county and school policies identify appropriate and meaningful supports and consequences for students.

TARGETED Assessment – Behavior

TARGETED support and student response may be assessed by consideration of the following:

- Teacher reports on a student’s behavior improvement
- Behavior awards program records
- Behavior observation reports
- Counselor and mentor reports
- Discipline referral records

A student may go to INTENSIVE level support immediately if behavior problems are severe and warrant immediate action.
INTENSIVE INSTRUCTION

INTENSIVE Support – English Language Arts

INTENSIVE support is triggered when a student’s progress in the general educational environment, despite rich and meaningful instruction at the CORE and TARGETED levels, slows to below State-approved grade-level standards, or significantly exceeds State-approved grade-level standards. INTENSIVE support is distinguished from TARGETED support by intensification of scaffolding, time, expertise and assessment. Additionally, INTENSIVE instruction is typically provided to smaller groups of similarly-skilled and needs-alike students or one-to-one. INTENSIVE instruction usually occurs three to five times per week for 30 to 60 minutes (over a minimum of nine weeks) and is more likely to occur outside the general classroom than the TARGETED level of support. Like TARGETED level support, INTENSIVE support incorporates the currently-adopted content standards and objectives and utilizes the principles of scaffolding, accelerating, enriching and differentiating to provide instruction that is relevant and engaging to the student and is meaningfully aligned to what is happening in the general education environment. Collaboration continues to be a key component to making this level of support effective and meaningful. SPL endorses four factors as significantly contributing to highly effective INTENSIVE support as follows: 1) the teacher plays a critical role in assessment and instruction; 2) the teacher uses a different method of delivery than the student has previously received; 3) the instruction is engaging and developmentally appropriate; 4) the instruction includes significant opportunities for authentic, integrated reading, writing, language, speaking, listening and problem solving. SPL does not promote isolated skill drill requiring students to independently make connections and generalizations to the CORE content. INTENSIVE support is most effective when provided by expert teachers to include, but not necessarily limited to, interventionists, special educators, instructional coaches, Title 1 teachers and specialists.

INTENSIVE Assessment – English Language Arts

Because of the urgency at this level, the response to INTENSIVE level support is formally monitored every one to two weeks and continually monitored using formative assessment processes. Assessment provides information on how to meet the student’s instructional and/or behavioral needs and assists the teacher in developing meaningful feedback for students. A variety of reliable assessments are available to monitor student needs. These may include, but are not limited to, informal reading inventories, interviews, observations and work samples. More formal diagnostic assessments may be given to get a comprehensive look at the student’s strengths and areas of need. For example, in determining whether there is a processing concern in reading, the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing may be administered to determine if the concern is in the area of memory, fluency, etc. Diagnostic information from observations may also be used. For example, if a student continues to have disruptive behavior, such as getting out of his/her seat during whole group instruction, a Functional Behavior Assessment may be conducted to determine any antecedents or consequences that are impacting the behavior.

If a student is unable to progress to the TARGETED or CORE level after reasonable duration of high quality support at the INTENSIVE level, decisions driven by useful and relevant assessment data are reviewed and discussed by the school team. Recommendations and/or referrals are made after careful consideration of a collection of relevant data collected over time. Like assessment at the TARGETED level, the assessment system used at the INTENSIVE level is relevant, balanced and may vary from student to student.

INTENSIVE Support – Mathematics

INTENSIVE instruction is designed for students who have participated in CORE instruction and TARGETED instruction within the general classroom and who need to have their learning extended further or who are not making progress toward mastery of grade-level standards. Students have participated in TARGETED instruction for a significant time and the teacher has documentation that the student requires additional support. Students who need INTENSIVE instruction may also have significant gaps in their mathematical understanding. INTENSIVE instruction is designed to focus on individual needs as indicated in the assembled data from CORE and TARGETED instruction and additional data sources as needed. Students receiving INTENSIVE support will continue to receive CORE instruction and may continue
TARGETED support while also receiving INTENSIVE support.

INTENSIVE support will occur outside of the identified classroom mathematics instruction. This instruction may occur before, during or after the school day dependent on available resources and personnel. Students who need INTENSIVE support must also have the opportunity to participate in rich grade-level curricula. In other words, students must have the opportunity to receive instruction in science, social studies, physical education and the arts.

INTENSIVE instruction is based on identified student needs. This support may be individualized or provided in small groups. This instruction engages the student in important mathematics with a focus on understanding concepts. In elementary school, the primary focus is on understanding number and operations as it relates to whole numbers. In middle school, the primary focus is understanding rational numbers. Support for high school students is designed to support their understanding of the mathematics class in which they are currently enrolled.

INTENSIVE Support – Behavior

INTENSIVE support is designed for high-risk students who do not make sufficient progress through TARGETED support. INTENSIVE support may be provided to small groups within the general education setting or through pull-out based upon student needs. The location of services and the delivery model may vary according to student needs, school configuration and resources.

INTENSIVE support for behavior may include the following:

- Teaching social skills
- Implementing individual behavior plans
- Collaborating between agencies
- Providing parent training
- Reconvening IEP and 504 Teams, if appropriate
- Referring to local mental health agencies

INTENSIVE Assessment – Behavior

INTENSIVE support and student response to INTENSIVE support for behavior may be assessed by consideration of the following:

- Teacher and/or parent reports on a student’s behavior improvement
- Behavior awards program and behavior observation reports
- Discipline referrals, both by teachers and the office
- Therapist, counselor and mentor observation notes and progress reports
- Behavior awards program documentation based on individual behavior contracts

INTENSIVE Assessment – Mathematics

Formative assessment processes are employed to design and adjust instruction. Information on student understanding of mathematical concepts should come from various sources including documentation from student interviews. Teachers should interact with students regularly to verify student understanding. Progress monitoring is embedded within the instruction and linked to the instruction provided during the INTENSIVE instruction.

If a special education evaluation is being considered for the student, it is advisable for the teacher to meet with the school psychologist prior to beginning the process to identify necessary documentation and/or data to be collected during intensive support instruction.
### Table: Suggested SPL Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Targeted Instruction</th>
<th>Intensive Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Per Session</td>
<td>15-30 minutes</td>
<td>30-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Session</td>
<td>Time will vary based on student needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 weeks minimum prior to moving to Intensive *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continues only until specific skill, concept, behavior is in place (usually short-term)</td>
<td>9 weeks minimum *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sessions</td>
<td>3-5 per week</td>
<td>3-5 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Progress Monitoring</td>
<td>Every 2-3 weeks</td>
<td>Every 1-2 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Refer to page 29 of guidance pertaining to Roles and Expectations of Teachers for exceptions.*
Decision-Making Considerations in SPL

SPL implementation across the state, in districts and in schools, involves developing common understanding of key components and processes, self-assessment of needs and resources at every level and training to cultivate new skills necessary to scale out personalized support for all students in West Virginia. SPL will be strengthened by increasing capacity to utilize efficient problem-solving processes to make decisions for all students. The five process steps remain the same whether decisions are being made by a single classroom teacher, a grade level or content area team, by a building leadership team or by any other level of team needed to address the needs of students.

Problem-solving team meetings should be scheduled regularly in each school (weekly to bi-monthly). By providing a strong problem-solving process with ongoing progress monitoring to assess the success of instruction across all levels, more students will have the opportunity to be academically, socially/emotionally and behaviorally successful. Circumventing the process to move students to the INTENSIVE level or referring a student for a special education evaluation without following the problem-solving process is not supported and should happen only under special circumstances that will be covered later in the guidance document.

Key Components

There are several aspects of the SPL Framework that are important to understand before implementation can be made system-wide. The following definitions will be helpful in understanding the key components of the SPL Framework.

Key Components
- Problem-Solving Team
- Problem-Solving Process
- Progress Monitoring
- Formative/Classroom Assessment
- Gap Analysis
- Instructional Scaffolding
- Research-Based Instructional Practice
- Data-Driven Dialogue
- Standard Treatment Protocol vs. Individual Problem-Solving Approach

Problem-Solving Team

Diverse representation and collegiality are essential elements of successful problem-solving teams. Teams must be composed of a variety of educational staff, including teachers, specialists, administrators and parents. Team membership should include individuals who have a diverse set of skills and expertise who can address a variety of behavioral, social/emotional and academic needs. The team should also be collegial in that teachers are supported and encouraged throughout the process. Problem-solving teams should identify a facilitator who guides the process and ensures a supportive atmosphere. A recorder and timekeeper also are important roles on a problem-solving team. Finally, designated consultants or case managers are essential to the follow through of problem-solving teams.

Problem-Solving Process

A problem-solving process includes a structured format for analyzing possible reasons for a student’s academic or behavioral needs and planning interventions. Utilizing a structured problem-solving approach when exploring, defining and prioritizing a teacher’s concerns helps the team make efficient use of time and increases the probability of selecting the right intervention(s).
1. Identify and Define Needs

The problem should be stated in observable, measurable terms, using direct measures of academics and/or behavior. The definition of the problem must focus on teachable skills that can be measured and can be changed through the process of instruction. Problems can be defined as the difference between what is observed/measured and an expectation for a student. Expectations can be developed based on local norms, normative standards, criterion-based measures, peer performance, instructional standards, developmental standards, district or state assessments and/or teacher expectations. For example, a second grade student may be reading 21 words per minute (wpm), while the classroom norm may be 32 wpm. Thus, defining a problem involves articulating an accepted expectation. It also is important to understand whether the identified problem exists for only one student, a small group of students or a large group of students since this knowledge will lead to different types of interventions. For large group problems, changes in overall curriculum and instruction may be necessary and problem solving is then conducted on a large scale. On the other hand, if a problem is present for only one or a very few students, individual problem-solving can take place. The classroom teacher typically collects data about the student’s performance, including information gathered from the parents, and brings the information to a problem-solving team meeting at the beginning of the process.

2. Analyze the Problem

The goal of problem analysis is to answer the question, “Why is this problem occurring?” During this step, the relevant information about the problem is gathered and considered, potential hypotheses about the probable causes of the problem are described and information is gathered to either confirm or disprove the hypotheses. Gathering information may involve further examination of classroom products, information provided by the parents, observations in the instructional setting, focused assessments or examination of data from other district or state assessments.

When the underlying cause is determined, the team may explore evidence-based instruction that is relevant. Some questions for the team to ask in analyzing the problem include:

- Has the student received quality instruction in the target skill?
- Does the curriculum support the development of the target skill?
- Does the school environment support the acquisition and application of the target skill?

3. Develop a Plan

The goal of step 3 is to develop an instructional plan that matches the identified student need and has the most likelihood of success.

A good instructional plan:

- explicitly defines the skill(s) to be taught;
- focuses on measurable objectives;
- defines who will complete various tasks, when and how;
- describes a process for measuring and monitoring effectiveness of instructional efforts (including a quantifiable baseline and target goal for the skill to be developed);
- reflects the resources available.
4. Implement and Monitor the Plan

The plan must also be monitored for integrity of implementation. The plan must specify who will do this and how often. Collecting and charting data on how the student is progressing (progress monitoring) is part of implementing the plan. The team should determine at the outset how progress monitoring will occur and what measures will be used. For example, behavioral interventions time sampling or other direct behavioral measures may be used, while academics may utilize formative assessment.

5. Evaluate and Adjust Plan

Progress monitoring is a methodology for measuring the effectiveness of instruction. The goal of progress monitoring is to answer the question, “Is the instruction working?” If instruction is not delivering the desired results, the instruction should be changed. Thus, a key feature of the methods used to collect data is that they can be administered frequently and are sensitive to small changes in skill levels. By plotting skill levels on a graph, trends in student performance can be visualized more easily.

The team then:

- Determines how the progress monitoring data will be managed/graphed (e.g., commercial web-based program such as DIBELS or AIMSweb, Excel, ChartDog, etc.)
- Decides who will do the progress monitoring and how often it will be done
- Sets logical data review timelines based on the planned instruction
- Determine, based on data, whether the instruction or the goal needs to be modified

If customized instruction is not producing the desired results, a first step is to evaluate whether the plan is being implemented as designed. If not, adjustments can be made. Teams can also consider whether the intensity of instruction needs to be increased by either; 1) reducing the size of the group; 2) increasing the amount of time/frequency it is delivered or 3) narrowing the focus of the instruction.

In summary, problem-solving is a self-correcting, decision-making model focused on academic and/or behavioral intervention development and monitoring using frequently collected, measurable data on student performance. The problem-solving process should be rich in data collected and can be repeated as necessary.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is a systematic method for tracking and comparing an individual’s or group’s performance and progress through data collection. A consistent monitoring plan is essential to determine effectiveness of instructional programs and interventions. Movement of a student within the instructional levels is determined by the data collected through progress monitoring. Progress monitoring is the way in which a team can gather the data used to make decisions during the problem-solving process. Progress monitoring varies depending on the level of intensity. For students at the CORE level, progress monitoring is provided to all students using on-going universal screening and assessments aligned with instruction. Students who are receiving more intensive instruction in TARGETED and INTENSIVE levels are provided more focused progress monitoring. Tools that are flexible, efficient, accessible and informative are a priority.

Formative/Classroom Assessment

The most effective assessment available for monitoring student progress on a specific skill is formative assessment. It is an alternative to other procedures that may be too costly, time consuming, disruptive to instruction or ineffective for identifying progress frequently. Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students’ achievement of intended instructional outcomes. It is characterized by several attributes:

1. Alignment - students are tested on the curriculum being taught.
2. Feedback - it provides feedback for teachers to modify subsequent learning activities and experiences.
Gap Analysis

Definition of a student’s performance and needs is considered within the context of standards. And, decisions about the most appropriate adjustments to instruction are made in light of the gap between what the student can do and what he/she is expected to do.

The process and tools used to measure and define the gap become more explicit and more consistent as a student’s level of support increases.

Instructional Scaffolding

Instructional scaffolding is a technique teachers use to provide students with the support they need to accomplish a task that initially is beyond their independent grasp. Inherent in the technique is the expectation that support will be gradually decreased; allowing the student to take progressively more responsibility.

Scaffolding can be provided in a variety of forms as needs indicate, including: modeling, guiding questions, additional opportunities for practice, a series of smaller tasks leading to a more complex task, and many others.

Research-Based Instructional Practice

A research-based instructional practice is one found to be reliable, trustworthy and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the practice is used with a particular group of students, the students can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice. In the absence of evidence, the instruction must be considered “best practice” based on available research and professional literature.

Data-Driven Dialogue

When educators look into classroom-based issues and concerns, collect and analyze data from a variety of sources, and establish plans for change, the SPL Framework has the greatest probability of success. Data-driven dialogue is a collective process designed to share common understandings of issues and events using information from a variety of sources. Data-driven dialogue requires changes in the working culture of groups and is an ongoing collaborative learning cycle.

Standard Treatment Protocol

In addition to the Individual Problem-Solving approach described in this guidance document and embraced by the SPL framework, sometimes it is appropriate to employ a Standard Treatment Protocol. This instructional approach typically provides intensive, short-term instructional interventions that follow a specified script, have research to support their effectiveness and are most frequently used at the TARGETED level with a small group of students using materials that support the general education curriculum.

Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions are research-based, have documented probability of producing change, are used in a standard manner among student groups and can be orchestrated by a team. Furthermore, progress monitoring occurs at designated times to determine the effectiveness of the intervention as well as changes in grouping or curriculum.
Guidance for West Virginia Schools and Districts

Roles and Expectations

District Administrators

District administrators have a vital role in the implementation of SPL. Superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors of curriculum and instruction, Title 1 and special education and others must demonstrate an understanding of SPL as well as monitor building-level implementation. District administrators’ most important role when implementing SPL is to help schools recognize that many services schools provide on a daily basis fit under the umbrella of SPL. School level administrators should be able to rely on district administrators to provide practical models and examples as well as provide the technology and other supports vital to SPL implementation. Furthermore, district level leadership should recognize and vocalize the relationship between SPL and student achievement.

Key expectations of District Administrators:

- Recognizing and acknowledging current practices that are functions of SPL
- Providing practical models
- Recognizing and vocalizing the relationship between SPL and student achievement
- Support professional development
- Provide technology and other support that emerges through self-assessment as critical to successful implementation

School Level Administrator

Because system change requires strong leadership, school level administrators must take the lead in ensuring positive change as well as incorporating staff development needs into the school implementation plan. Even though administrators may designate other school personnel to participate in the problem-solving team meetings, administrators are expected to attend the meetings at least monthly to support the process as well as identify and respond to any needs of the team. Building administrators are also responsible for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: Comparison of Two Approaches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universal Screening</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class-wide assessment for all students to determine who is at risk and who is above grade-level content standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensive</strong></td>
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</table>

Decision-Making in SPL
selecting problem-solving team members and helping them work collaboratively as a problem-solving team. It is recommended that administrators should carefully consider the school culture in making assignments to the team and in providing the appropriate professional development to all staff. Furthermore, principals need to support necessary schedule changes as well as identify scheduling needs to support problem-solving teams. The principal’s active support of the process must be evidenced by vocal support, by resources the principal makes available to the process and, most importantly, by active participation on the team.

**Teachers**

A key understanding of SPL is the expectation that the quality of the general education classroom will allow the majority of students to be proficient and meet content standards. Therefore, all teachers play a central role in the SPL framework when it is implemented system-wide. Teachers are curriculum experts who are expected to plan and implement instruction. Specifically, at the CORE level, teachers are expected to identify students who are not making sufficient progress based on formative assessment processes and to adjust instruction accordingly through differentiation, scaffolding and flexible grouping, etc. Furthermore, teachers utilize formative/classroom assessment processes and progress monitoring to determine whether the instructional adjustments are working. Important components of teachers’ responsibilities at the CORE level are to collect and discuss, with colleagues, student performance data, as well as to share and compare the relative success of various options for grouping, differentiation and scaffolding. Ultimately, increases in student performance depend on the quality of these conversations and upon teachers adjusting their instruction to support the needs of their students.

When a student is not learning from the instruction provided at the CORE level, it is the teacher’s responsibility to talk with the student’s parents about the concern and to begin providing TARGETED instruction, prior to making a referral to the problem-solving team. The SPL framework supports a high degree of flexibility for TARGETED instruction. The right TARGETED instruction is expected to allow students to flow in and out of this first level of additional support as a means of sustaining their learning. If a student does not respond to TARGETED instruction the classroom teacher considers involving the school's problem-solving team in making the most appropriate instructional decisions. The teacher then becomes responsible for providing relevant information about the student, contributing to the decision-making and participating in implementing the plan. A teacher’s participation may include providing instruction, formative/classroom assessment processes, progress monitoring and communicating and collaborating with other service providers, with the problem-solving team, and with the student’s parents.

Teachers are responsible for referring students to the problem-solving team when a specific skill, concept, behavior or general outcome seems to require more INTENSIVE instruction and a student’s progress is less than expected after a minimum of 9 weeks of TARGETED instruction.

### Key expectations of Teachers:
- Identify students who are not making sufficient progress and to adjust instruction accordingly
- Utilize formative/classroom assessment and progress monitoring to determine whether the instructional adjustments are working
- Communicate with parents regarding student progress
- Collect and discuss with colleagues student performance data, as well as to share and compare the relative success of various options for grouping, differentiation and scaffolding
- Provide relevant information to the problem-solving team as necessary
- Collaborate with designated consultants as appropriate
- Participate in the problem-solving team meetings
- Participate in the design and implementation of the customized instructional plan

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### Key expectations of School Level Administrator:
- Identify the building team that will consistently participate in the process of identifying and ensuring the provision of SPL
- Participate in problem-solving team meetings at least monthly
- Dialogue with the problem-solving team, regularly
- Flexibility manage schedules for students and teams
Parents/Families/Guardians

Parents or guardians are an integral part of the SPL framework and problem-solving process. Their participation is valued. Parents or guardians are encouraged to talk with their children’s teachers and to attend problem-solving team meetings to provide pertinent information about their child’s educational history, learning style, difficulty or area of advancement and ask questions about their child’s progress or lack of progress. Because it may be a new experience for some parents or guardians to be actively involved, special care must be taken to inform parents or guardians and make them feel a valued member of the team.

Key expectations of Parents or Guardians:
- Collaborate with teachers regarding their child’s needs
- Share information about their child and family, as appropriate
- Support student learning at home
- Attend problem-solving team meetings and partner in implementing the instructional plan and in progress monitoring

Problem-Solving Team Composition

The problem-solving team should be composed of professionals from multiple perspectives, although the composition for any given student will vary given the area(s) of concern.

The team may include when needed:
- Building level specialists (depending on the area of expertise)
- Curriculum support team members/reading or math specialists, instructional coaches
- School counselor/school social worker(s)
- Behavior specialist/positive behavior support team member
- Speech-language pathologists
- Title I or reading/math specialist
- Teacher of deaf/hard of hearing
- Teacher of visually impaired
- Teacher of English language learner
- Teacher of gifted
- Occupational therapist/physical therapist
- Nurse
- School psychologist

Roles and Expectations: Problem-Solving Team Members

School Level Administrator

Principal or SPL designee is integral to the success of the problem-solving team through the guidance and support they provide to the team members. The principal or SPL designee monitors the day-to-day operations of the process and attends any district-level trainings and meetings that support district-wide implementation. This individual is responsible for collecting and reviewing the documentation used by the problem-solving team, for notifying teachers about the days, times and locations of meetings, and for coordinating any specialists who need to attend the meetings.

Furthermore, the principal or SPL designee is also responsible for ensuring that data is collected, including progress monitoring, instructional plans and numbers of students in TARGETED and INTENSIVE instructional supports, as well as students who are referred for a special education evaluation.

Key expectations of School Level Administrator:
- Monitor and organize problem-solving process, including scheduling meetings and notifying members
- Attend district meetings
- Collect relevant information and documentation
Meeting Facilitator

The meeting facilitator may be the principal, SPL designee or another individual on the problem-solving team who has the skill set necessary for facilitating efficient meetings. The meeting facilitator must have a strong working knowledge of the problem-solving process, as well as effective facilitation skills which include keeping all individuals who attend the meeting informed and focused on developing an instructional plan, encouraging participation from others, helping redirect the dialogue if the discussion gets off task, clarifying and summarizing information being communicated during the meeting. An important responsibility of the meeting facilitator is to establish and maintain a supportive and collaborative atmosphere. The meeting facilitator also attempts to resolve conflicts that may emerge during the meeting as well as to support team agreement when appropriate.

Key expectations of Meeting Facilitator:
• Facilitate and focus meetings
• Maintain a collaborative atmosphere
• Resolve conflicts

Time Keeper

The time keeper is essential in making certain that meeting times are respected. Because many decisions need to be made during meetings, the team must stay on task and always be cognizant of time. The time keeper should monitor the team’s use of time and remind the team when time is limited in each stage of the meeting.

Key expectations of Time Keeper:
• Monitor meeting time and remind team of time limits

Provider(s) of Customized Instruction

When a student is referred to the problem-solving team in response to an identified need, an instructional plan is established. The clarity and agreement about the instruction to be put in place and about the individual(s) providing the instruction are critical to the success of the plan. The plan may be implemented by a variety of individuals in the system, including but not limited to, as appropriate, the classroom teacher, special education teacher, Title I teacher, speech-language pathologists, a gifted teacher, school counselor, school psychologist or school social worker. Although nurses can be consulted when developing plans in select cases, their role in providing the support as part of their case load should only be considered in the most significant cases. The most effective providers of customized instruction are individuals who understand the student’s need relative to the specific skills or general outcomes that are missing. Providers also are most effective when they have the resources they need, including the time and materials necessary for providing relevant instruction. Also key to this role is opportunity to communicate on a regular basis with all the individuals participating in implementation of the student’s instructional plan.

Key expectations of Recorder:
• Record/complete the instructional plan
• Remind team about essential components of the plan
• Keep meeting minutes

Provider(s) of Customized Instruction:
• Provide interventions
• Communicate with classroom teacher and problem-solving team on a regular basis about effectiveness of instruction
Progress Monitor

Another vital component of the instructional plan is clarification of responsible for progress monitoring. The progress monitor(s), first and foremost, must have an understanding of the progress monitoring tools available and the purposes for each tool. Progress monitors can include teacher(s), paraprofessionals, retired teachers and support personnel providing they have the requisite skills to administer, score and interpret the results of the formative assessments. Additionally, progress monitor(s) must communicate regularly with the providers of the instruction and with members of the problem-solving team to allow the results to impact instruction in productive ways and ultimately to increase the opportunity to meet the student’s needs.

Key expectations of Progress Monitor:
- Monitor the effectiveness of instruction as defined and directed by instructional plan
- Communicate on a weekly basis with providers of customized instruction
- Communicate with the problem-solving team
- Summarize/chart student progress
- Enter data in WVEIS On the Web (WOW) (Interventions Tab) if defined in the instructional plan

School Psychologists

School psychologists are experiencing a significant role change that focuses more on targeted assessment and support. Although the role of the school psychologist varies somewhat in every district, school psychologists are expected to play an active role in the implementation of the SPL framework, as well as be an active member on problem-solving teams. School psychologists have considerable skills in the area of consultation, problem-solving, assessment and systems change that lend themselves directly to the implementation of SPL. School psychologists are expected to support schools in developing problem-solving teams that are effective and efficient, support the use of a relevant formative/classroom assessment process leading to more relevant instruction at all levels of SPL, support implementation of progress monitoring tools that are sensitive to small changes and train other school personnel on effective consultation skills. The school psychologist may or may not be the SPL meeting facilitator. Decisions about the level of leadership a school psychologist has in the problem-solving process will be dependent on school needs, administrator expectations and the school psychologist’s individual skill set.

Key expectations of School Psychologist:
- Support buildings in developing their problem-solving teams
- Support the use of relevant formative/classroom assessment
- Participate as a designated consultant and/or SPL meeting facilitator
- Progress monitor as appropriate
- Provide diagnostic assessment as needs indicate

School Counselors/School Social Workers

School counselors and school social workers are important participants in the SPL framework. Their roles will vary by building. School counselors and social workers can be a valuable resource at the CORE, TARGETED or INTENSIVE levels to support implementation of instructional plans or to participate on the problem-solving team. School counselors and social workers have considerable skills in consultation and working with parents; therefore, they may be a part of the team as a designated consultant, as an outside consultant as a provider of customized instruction or as a progress monitor. Decisions about the level of involvement a school counselor or social worker has in the problem-solving process will be dependent on school needs, administrator expectations and the individual’s skill set.

Key expectations of School Counselors/School Social Workers:
- Support the problem-solving process
- Provide consultation to the Problem-Solving Team as appropriate
- Engage families in the process
- Support and empower families to partner in the process
Specialists
(Speech-Language Pathologist/Occupational Therapist/Physical Therapist/Nurse/English Language Learner Teachers/Gifted Teachers/Title I Teachers)

Specialists are important to the problem-solving team; however, the level of their participation will vary based on their caseload, level of expertise, time in building and funding source. Specialists are expected to participate in the SPL process as outside consultants who help in the development of instructional plans and the identification of appropriate formative/classroom assessment processes and progress monitoring tools. On the other hand, specialists are not expected to provide all of the customized instruction developed in their area of expertise or progress monitor all students receiving additional support. The level of participation will be dependent on the specialist and the intensity of support. The level of specialist support will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis and always include the input of the specialist.

Key expectations of Specialists:
- Consult with problem-solving team on development of customized instruction, useful formative/classroom assessment and progress monitoring tools for specialized area
- Support customized instruction at the CORE, TARGETED and INTENSIVE level as appropriate
Support for Personalized Learning (SPL) interfaces with all existing programs within a school. All students will benefit from exposure to an SPL framework. Therefore, students who are eligible for the following programs will continue to benefit from the academic and behavioral supports that are provided within the SPL framework. This section will discuss some of these programs and how they interface with SPL.

**ADHD via Other Health Impaired**

Students who have a diagnosis of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are not automatically eligible for special education, unless they have been made eligible by another district. Such students should be referred to the problem-solving team if they are unsuccessful with the supports offered at the CORE level. Eligibility for a Section 504 Plan should be considered as well. If the student continues to need more intensive support, special education eligibility may need to be considered. Eligibility for special education will require a proper assessment of behavior checklists (school and community), review of academic records, and consultation with the student’s physician to determine whether the ADHD is the cause of the student’s deficits. Similar to EBD assessment, if the necessary assessments have been administered during TARGETED or INTENSIVE levels, new instruments may not be necessary.

**Autism**

Students with a medical diagnosis of autism are not automatically eligible for special education. If a student has been made eligible by another district and is still struggling despite the support they are receiving at the CORE level they will be referred to the problem-solving team. More intense support, which may include eligibility for a Section 504 Plan, will be considered. If the student’s progress continues to not meet reasonable expectations through additional levels of support, eligibility for special education services may need to be considered. Throughout the decision-making process, it will be important to recognize that autism is a spectrum disorder with varying levels of involvement. Some of the students with this medical diagnosis may fall under the considerations for those in the low incidence population. Eligibility for special education will require assessments that focus particular attention on a student’s learning strengths in receptive and expressive language; supporting instruction that is offered in compatible presentation modes. The eligibility committee will review the eligibility checklist utilizing data that has been collected.

**Communication Disorders**

Students with significant speech-language impairments that cannot be corrected through a short-term intervention with the speech-language pathologist or via consultation from the speech-language pathologist with the parent or classroom teacher can move to special education evaluation without additional delay. To make this decision, it is necessary for the speech-language pathologist to have observed the student and to have concurred with this decision.

Students with mild articulation and/or language concerns should be referred to TARGETED and/or INTENSIVE instruction before consideration of special education eligibility.

**Critical Skills**

Policy 2512: *Instructional Supports for Third and Eighth Grade Students to Achieve Critical Skills* includes criteria for providing instructional supports. It is a program designed for third and eighth grade students who are not mastering English/language arts and mathematics.
Connecting the Pieces of SPL

adequately for success at the next grade level. The Critical Skills framework supports shared responsibility between general education, special education, Title I and ELL teachers for the learning outcomes of third and eighth grade students. It serves as a prevention model to provide TARGETED and INTENSIVE instruction for those students identified as at-risk of academic challenges. SPL incorporates and builds on the process of Critical Skills. Instruction is delivered before, during and after school and during summer and school breaks.

**Emotional/Behavioral Disorder**

Students who have significant behavior concerns should initially be referred to the problem-solving team. However, if the student makes insufficient progress and is referred for a special education evaluation, the Eligibility Committee should continue to follow the recommended checklist and guidelines according to Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities. The assessment process will involve a meeting with the Eligibility Committee to review the eligibility determination checklist utilizing data collected during TARGETED and INTENSIVE instruction. It is essential that standardized behavior checklists (e.g., BASC-II or CBCL) and/or behavior observations from the perspective of the school and community continue to be utilized in making the final decision regarding eligibility. However, it should be noted that such instruments may also be used during TARGETED or INTENSIVE levels, to determine areas of deficits and appropriate instructional focus. In such cases, the data from these prior assessments may be reviewed rather than re-administered if they have been completed in the recent past.

**English Language Learners**

A three-leveled, early intervention framework is essential to support the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs). ELLs need to be provided CORE supports that enhance language acquisition in conjunction with content instruction. Most students who are identified as ELLs are provided with English as a Second Language (ESL) services; however, for students who do not demonstrate progress, an individual problem-solving process should be utilized.

SPL directly supports students who have English language acquisition needs by providing a structured problem-solving process that employs the skills and expertise of professionals throughout the system, including county-level ELL coordinators. There are several considerations when gathering data for ELL students. Identifying the level of understanding that the ELL student has in relation to Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is important across CORE, TARGETED and INTENSIVE interventions. Also, data collected through the problem-solving process must be compared to other ELL students with a similar background, age, educational experience and amount of exposure to English acquisition. Furthermore, language acquisition must be considered a part of progress monitoring. In many instances, a cultural liaison will be important to support parents and families throughout the problem-solving process.

**Gifted**

Differentiation of curriculum, instruction and assessment is essential for meeting the needs of students who are gifted. SPL provides support systems for students with exceptional ability or potential. In gifted education, strength-based instruction or strength-based programming are used to describe leveled instruction.

SPL supports long-term planning and monitoring of student progress that allows students to learn and grow toward accelerated expectations. The pace of instruction is based upon individual experiences and need and may include different forms of acceleration over time. SPL embeds gifted education into the daily focus of quality instruction. Academic, social/emotional and behavioral outcomes become critical targets for students, not solely enrichment targets. The problem-solving process which uses data, strengths and interests of students to implement appropriate, rigorous and relevant curriculum and instruction are strengths of SPL. A variety of assessments contribute new data so that learning is dynamic and adjustments are made for pace, depth and complexity of the evidence-based practices utilized.
Individualized Education Programs

Because SPL encompasses all students, students with IEPs may be serviced within the three levels. However, because SPL is utilized for the identification of a specific learning disability (SLD), understanding how the framework fits with eligibility for special education is important. Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities includes revised criteria for the identification of students with SLD.

Intellectual Disability

To properly determine whether a student has significant cognitive concerns that are impacting his/her ability to be successful within CORE or TARGETED instruction, it will still be necessary to complete a standard battery assessment (i.e., Intellectual ability, Adaptive, Achievement) and meet the eligibility criteria as identified by Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

PBIS is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occurs. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making targeted behaviors less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

Systems are needed to support the collective use of best practices by individuals within the organization. The PBIS process emphasizes the creation of systems that support the adoption and durable implementation of evidence-based practices and procedures, and fit within on-going school reform efforts. An interactive approach that includes opportunities to correct and improve four key elements is used in school-wide PBIS focusing on: 1) Outcomes, 2) Data, 3) Practices, and 4) Systems. The list below illustrates how these key elements work together to build a sustainable system:

- Outcomes: academic and behavior targets that are endorsed and emphasized by students, families, and educators (What is important to each particular learning community?)
- Practices: instruction and strategies that are evidence based (How will you reach the goals?)
- Data: information that is used to identify status, need for change, and effects of interventions
- (What data will you use to support your success or barriers?)
- Systems: supports that are needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of the practices of PBIS. (What durable systems can be implemented that will sustain this over the long haul?) (Taken and modified from the PBIS.org website)

PBIS supports students at the CORE, TARGETED and INTENSIVE levels using evidence-based supports and analysis of behavioral data. Students have increased access to instruction which promotes academic achievement and a safe and positive learning environment. SPL and PBIS establish the expectation of high-quality academic and behavior instruction at the school-wide and classroom levels before a problem-solving team can determine whether a student needs additional services. Furthermore, parents are actively engaged in teaching and acknowledging identified positive academic and social/emotional behaviors at home for students who require more intensive supports. SPL and PBIS allow schools to concentrate on academic and behavior needs with varying levels of intensity by providing supports at different levels. Problem-solving teams support classroom teachers when a student is not making adequate progress.

Preschool

Because of the many variables that affect preschool in West Virginia, the implementation of SPL for this age group has special considerations. West Virginia’s Universal Pre-K Program is a highly collaborative effort which includes public schools, federally funded Head Start, community-based, for-profit, not-for-profit and faith-based programs. Because preschool enrollment is not mandated and services are delivered by several providers, leaders must design an approach that represents the interests of all facets of the WV Pre-K population. Allocating resources
effectively for services to Pre-K learners is instrumental in the design of a deliverable SPL plan.

Each County Early Childhood Collaborative Team should ensure a model for working with service providers outside the school system to create a climate conducive for a successful preschool SPL program. Staff training and consistency are paramount in addressing a viable problem-solving process for preschool learners.

WV’s Universal Pre-K Program provides rigorous early learning and development standards, as well as a set of research-based, state-approved curricular frameworks which support classroom integration of standards. When standards are utilized as intended, differentiated and personalized learning occurs on a regular basis in classrooms. The WV Pre-K Child Assessment System also ensures children are assessed using a holistic approach, utilizing a formative process to access children’s learning over time which addresses the whole child. These readily available supports assist with the composition of high-quality Pre-K programming. The unrivalled value of early recognition and intervention will help guide the role of, and necessary measures for, screening and progress monitoring.

Because of the unique nature of all preschool learners, families are the most knowledgeable adults in their lives; therefore, family engagement is critical for student accomplishment.

Severe and Low Incidence Disabilities

Students identified or suspected of having severe medical, physical (includes vision and hearing impairments) or intellectual disabilities may be referred directly for special education evaluation upon the school becoming aware of their level of need, whether the knowledge is the result of a private evaluation, child find screening or records from another education agency.

Specific Learning Disability

Students who have not responded to TARGETED and INTENSIVE interventions in the areas of reading, written language or math may be eligible for special education as a student with a Specific Learning Disability. Data gathered during TARGETED and INTENSIVE instruction will indicate the student’s areas of deficit when receiving research-based instruction. Before proceeding with special education eligibility, parents need to sign permission for a comprehensive evaluation. With permission, a multidisciplinary evaluation team (which may include members from the problem-solving team) will determine what data are needed to complete the evaluation. Data used in making eligibility decisions may include results from all or some of the following assessments: formative/ classroom assessments, WESTEST 2, diagnostic testing and standardized assessments (intelligence tests, individual achievement tests). However, observations of the child in his/her learning environment will also need to be included. Standardized assessments that are administered should have utility for designing intensive instruction for the student or to rule out exclusionary factors such as Intellectual Disability or Emotional/ Behavioral Disorder.

Title I

In schools where Title I is present, these services can contribute additional supports and strengthen the broader framework of SPL. Title I personnel can be valued members of the SPL problem solving team. Title I Programs within the SPL framework are able to operate with a School-Wide focus or with a focus on Targeted Assistance.

SPL in Title I School-Wide Programs

Schools receiving Title I funding are afforded additional staff and resources to supplement the SPL framework. Title I schools may operate a school-wide program or a targeted assistance program. The school-wide reform strategy requires that a school:

- conduct a comprehensive needs assessment;
- identify and commit to specific goals and strategies that address those needs;
- create a comprehensive plan; and
- conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the school-wide program and revise the plan as necessary.

Adopting this strategy should result in an ongoing, comprehensive plan for school improvement owned by the entire school community and tailored to its unique needs. Progress monitoring, participation in the collaborative
team work, TARGETED and INTENSIVE supports are allowable as long as they are addressed in the Title I school-wide plan and are justified through the school’s needs assessment. Services to students should first be provided in the general classroom or may be provided in a “pullout” setting on a limited basis. Title I funds must be used for services that supplement, and do not supplant, the services that would be provided, in the absence of the federal Title I funds, from non-Federal sources.

**SPL in Title I Targeted Assistance Programs**

A targeted assistance school differs from a school-wide program school in several significant respects:

- Title I funds may be used in targeted assistance schools only for programs that provide services to eligible children identified as having the greatest need for special assistance
- Title I funds must be used for services that supplement, and do not supplant, the services that would be provided, in the absence of the federal Title I funds, from non-Federal sources
- Records must be maintained that document that Title I funds are spent on activities and services for only Title I participating students

A targeted assistance program employs staff paid with Title I funds to serve only those students who have been identified as being most at-risk of not meeting the State’s challenging standards. A targeted assistance school generally identifies eligible children within the school on the basis of multiple, educationally related, objective criteria established by the LEA. Children from preschool through grade two must be selected solely on the basis of such criteria as teacher judgment, interviews with parents, and developmentally appropriate measures that determine which children are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the State’s challenging content and student performance standards. Services to eligible students may be provided in the general classroom or may be provided in a “pullout” setting on a limited basis. Targeted assistance programs should utilize effective instructional strategies that meet the following criteria:

- Give primary consideration to providing extended learning time such as an extended school year, before and after school, and summer programs and opportunities
- Help provide an accelerated, high-quality curriculum
- Minimize removing children from the general classroom during regular school hours for supplemental instruction

Consistent with a school-wide program, Title I funds must be used for services that supplement and do not supplant, the services that would be provided in the absence of the federal Title I funds, from non-federal sources.

**21st Century Community Learning Center Program**

This program creates community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for students, particularly for those who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local approved content standards in English/language arts and mathematics; offers a broad array of enrichment activities that complement the regular school program; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating students. Programs are delivered before and after school and during the summer months.
WHO PROVIDES THE SUPPORT?

A variety of people may provide instructional supports within the SPL framework. In the CORE, classroom teachers are the primary provider of instruction. At the TARGETED and INTENSIVE levels, classroom teachers, Title I teachers, special education teachers, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists and school counselors may participate in providing instruction depending on student need, instructional expertise, schedules, caseloads and funding. It is suggested that each district and school assess their resources in the context of student needs and determine individuals in their building who are already qualified or who can be trained to provide the necessary instructional supports.

WHO PROGRESS MONITORS OR CONDUCTS ASSESSMENTS IN THE SPL FRAMEWORK?

As detailed in the assessment section of this document, high quality assessment is accomplished through a comprehensive assessment plan that includes five types of assessment processes: Screening/Interim, Formative/Classroom, Progress Monitoring, Diagnostic and Summative assessments. The framework suggests these processes be conducted by those individuals the local leadership determines to be best prepared and most available. Decisions will be influenced by the tools selected to accomplish the goals of each assessment. Some types of assessments require minimal training; for these types, schools may select multiple individuals to be trained, including paraprofessionals and other school personnel. Behavior progress monitoring data also can be collected by a variety of individuals. District-wide progress monitoring instruments may be used, allowing aspects of collection and analysis to be accomplished through responsibilities shared by district level personnel, classroom teachers and other designated building staff. Some diagnostic instruments will, on the other hand, need to be administered by licensed individuals or professionals with more training and experience administering specific assessments.

HOW DO STUDENTS MOVE BETWEEN CORE, TARGETED AND INTENSIVE LEVELS?

Essentially, students move between levels based on their response to instruction. Relevant evidence of response to instruction is obtained through the use of the five types of assessment detailed in this guidance document. Through collaborative problem-solving, decisions are made regarding the need to increase or decrease the kind and/or level of support. Districts need to identify decision rules for justifying movement between levels, with appropriate flexibility for exceptions as circumstances indicate.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS USED WITH THE SPL FRAMEWORK?

Most appropriate instructional response is accomplished when a variety of relevant assessment processes are employed to collect, analyze and record and respond to evidence of student performance. The collaborative approach supported by the SPL framework makes simple to understand graphs or charts a valued format for portraying performance data. It is important that districts and schools identify a system they will use for documenting and communicating the instructional strategies and scaffolds that are used. Both kinds of information are needed for making the best decisions about how to maximize learning for students.
HOW IS SPL FUNDED?
Funding for SPL is a local decision. Because SPL requires schools to use staff, time and materials differently, schools and districts are encouraged to reconsider how general funds are expended as this initiative is launched. There are several federal formula grants that can support efforts. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 allows for up to 15% of Part B allocation to be used for Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) which targets students without disabilities and approved in special education/LEA application. Title I schools that operate a school-wide program have quite a bit of flexibility and should be able to align supports easily in an SPL approach.

IS SPL JUST A WAY TO AVOID PROVIDING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?
No. SPL is a way to integrate the mandates of ESEA’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and IDEA so that all students receive high quality, effective instruction in the general education setting and beyond. SPL also is a framework of support for high quality instruction for students who do receive special education services. The intent is to generate a seamless system of support that is available to all students at the first sign of need.

CAN SPL BE USED FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE HIGH ACHIEVING?
Absolutely, SPL is intended to be a seamless system of high quality instructional practices allowing all students to sustain significant progress, whether they are considered at-risk, exceeding grade-level expectations or at any point along the continuum. Students who are advanced based on evidence obtained through a collection of assessment data can be provided instructional supports that deepen and extend their learning. Gifted students need strength-based leveled instruction based on their needs. Gifted students with learning difficulties will also need instruction to address their skill deficits.

HOW DOES A PROBLEM-SOLVING TEAM DIFFER FROM AN ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE?
In the SPL framework, the focus for the problem-solving team is on utilizing a collection of assessment data to determine student response to instruction and on collaboratively identifying the best strategies to help students be more successful, academically and behaviorally. Classroom teachers are central and highly-valued members of the problem-solving team. The problem-solving team promotes a collegial atmosphere where teachers work together to solve student problems and use dependable and efficient assessment methods to measure student progress.

An Eligibility Committee is responsible for identifying students who may have a disability that requires Special Education and related services in order for the student to learn. Eligibility Committees have typically been comprised of specialists, including school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, nurses, special education teachers, etc. With SPL, Eligibility Committees will continue to be important to ensure necessary data are collected when considering eligibility. Records of a student’s participation and performance through the levels of SPL support will be part of the data used when eligibility is under consideration. Additional information such as observations, possible diagnostic assessments or other standardized measures may also be considered necessary and relevant by the Eligibility Committee to complete a comprehensive evaluation. A portion of the problem-solving team as well as other individuals important to the evaluation process may be included in the Eligibility Committee.
HOW/WHAT DO WE COMMUNICATE TO PARENTS?

Parents or guardians are an integral part of high functioning SPL. Once a concern surfaces, it is important that school personnel understand the value of parent input and participation throughout the problem-solving process and on through personalization of instruction. Districts and schools need to be prepared to facilitate parent involvement, beginning with the problem identification phase and continuing through each phase of the process. Parents are considered part of the problem-solving team whether the team of educators is one teacher or a team of professionals. Parents can provide information about their child that will be useful for making the most appropriate instructional decisions. The SPL framework places high value on parent involvement.

DO I HAVE TO USE THE SPL FRAMEWORK TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY?

To align with federal laws and regulations, WVDE revised Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities to require Eligibility Committees to utilize the SPL process in determining eligibility for a Specific Learning Disability. The expectation is that data are collected during the time a student receives additional levels or layers of support within the SPL system and supplemented as appropriate by other data that may be needed to complete the requirements of an individualized comprehensive evaluation used to qualify a student as having a Specific Learning Disability.

IF A PARENT REQUESTS AN IMMEDIATE EVALUATION WITHIN THE EIGHTY DAY TIME FRAME DURING OR PRIOR TO THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS, IS THE SCHOOL OBLIGATED TO EVALUATE?

Yes. If a parent requests an immediate evaluation, schools will be expected to explain the SPL process and the support their child will receive during the documentation period. Schools may not talk parents out of requesting an evaluation; however, it is expected that parents will be informed of the current evaluation practices. If parents request a traditional assessment, schools will be expected to administer a comprehensive, psycho educational evaluation. Determination of a Specific Learning Disability will be made based on a collection of information processed through Eligibility Committee.

HOW WILL THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PLAN FOR A STUDENT AFTER HE OR SHE HAS BEEN FOUND ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES THROUGH THE SPL PROCESS?

The seamless system of supports and services characteristic of high functioning SPL is dependent upon ongoing collaboration between all the individuals making instructional decisions for students. Members of a problem-solving team and, as appropriate, members of the Eligibility Committee will, upon addition of any new layers or levels of support, communicate current assessment data and conclusions reached through problem-solving processes to new providers.
IS SPL A SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM?
No. SPL is not synonymous with special education. Rather, special education is an important component of a comprehensive SPL framework that also incorporates CORE, TARGETED and INTENSIVE levels of prevention and support. Decisions regarding use of resources and appropriate configurations of support are a collective responsibility involving all school staff (e.g., principal, general educators, special educators, content specialists, psychologists) working together with a common priority to provide and responsively remove support as students’ needs indicate appropriate.

HOW DOES AN SPL FRAMEWORK WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH INCLUSIVE SCHOOL MODELS AND LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT?
Within an SPL framework, the levels refer to the type and intensity of support and services, not where they are provided. Students may receive different levels of instructional support within the general education classroom through CORE and TARGETED instruction. INTENSIVE support is most typically provided in a separate location by a general education teacher or other professional. Staffing decisions are made in context at the local level.

WHAT IMPACT DOES SPL HAVE ON STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT STRUGGLING?
An important component of an effective SPL framework is the quality of the CORE curriculum, where all students receive high-quality instruction aligned to WV Content Standards and Objectives and differentiated and scaffolded as students’ needs indicate. Strong CORE instruction allows teachers and parents to be confident that a student’s need for more intensive instruction or referral for special education evaluation is not due to ineffective classroom instruction. In a well designed SPL system CORE instruction is effective and sufficient for about 80 percent of the student population.

WHAT ARE DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING ACTIVITIES?
Differentiated instruction is a teacher’s response to learners’ needs including respectful tasks, flexible grouping and ongoing assessment. Teachers can differentiate content, process or product based on students’ readiness, interests and learning profiles. A process of designing lesson plans that meets the needs of the range of learners; such planning includes learning objectives, grouping practices, teaching methods, varied assignments and varied materials chosen based on student skill levels and learning preferences. Differentiated Instruction focuses on instructional strategies, instructional groupings and use of an array of materials.
Accommodations: Considerations that are given so that a student may access the general education curriculum. Accommodations do not change the content and are not considered interventions.

Aim-line: The straight line connecting a student’s baseline level of performance with his or her long-range goal; the slope of the aimline shows the expected rate of improvement if the student is going to meet the long-range goal.

Baseline data: Data that is collected before an intervention or program change begins.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A behavior intervention plan must be based on a Functional Behavioral Assessment process (FBA). It is developed and implemented by a collaborative team, which includes the student and parent. The plan includes practical and specific strategies designed to increase or decrease a defined behavior. These strategies address preventative techniques, teaching replacement behaviors, how to respond impeding behavior and crisis management, if necessary.

CORE Level Instruction: CORE Instruction is provided to all students in the classroom. These interventions are preventive and proactive; implementation is school-wide or by whole classrooms; often connected to Core instruction. (e.g. Bully proofing, Guided Reading). These may be research-based, but are not necessarily prescriptive. Differentiated instruction is provided in CORE instruction.

Criterion-Referenced Assessment: Represents an approach to assessment designed to provide a measure of performance that allows for inferences to be made in terms of a clearly-defined domain of learning tasks (FAST, SCASS, 2012).

Data-Driven Decision-Making: The process of planning for student success (both academic and behavioral) through attention and response to a student’s learning needs and ongoing progress monitoring data.

Differentiated Instruction: Differentiated instruction is a teacher’s response to learners’ needs including respectful tasks, flexible grouping and ongoing assessment. Teachers can differentiate content, process or product based on students’ readiness, interests and learning profiles. A process of designing lesson plans that meets the needs of the range of learners; such planning includes learning objectives, grouping practices, teaching methods, varied assignments and varied materials chosen based on student skill levels and learning preferences. Differentiated Instruction focuses on instructional strategies, instructional groupings and use of an array of materials.

Duration: For the purposes of documenting SPL, duration refers to the length (number of minutes) of a session multiplied by the number of sessions per school year. “Sufficient duration” is dependent on a number of factors including the program or strategy being used, the age of the student and the complexity and severity of needs.

Evidenced-based Instruction: An evidenced-based instructional practice is one found to be reliable, trustworthy and valid based on evidence to suggest that when it is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement.

Explicit Instruction: Systematic instructional approach that includes a set of delivery and design procedures derived from effective schools research merged with behavior analysis; essential components of well-designed explicit instruction include visible delivery features of group instruction with a high level of teacher and student interactions and the less observable, instructional design principles and assumptions that make up the content and strategies to be taught.
Flexible Grouping: The ability for students to move among different groups based upon their performance and instructional needs, regardless of the student's special education or general education identification or eligibility.

Formative Assessment: A process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students’ achievement of intended instructional outcomes (CCSSO, FAST, SCASS, 2007).

Frequency: How often a behavior or intervention occurs.

Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA): This is a process for determining the cause (or function) of behavior before developing an intervention or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The intervention /BIP is based on the hypothesized cause (function) of the behavior.

Gap Analysis: Gap Analysis is a method for measuring the difference between the student’s current level of performance and benchmark expectations.

Growth Chart: Graphical display of individual student’s growth and performance in a particular skill or set of skills.

High-End Learning: Inquiry-based, inductive learning that focuses on exploration, problem-solving, higher-level thinking, creativity and persistence that can be meaningfully integrated across the curriculum.

Intensity: The adjustment of duration, length and teacher-to-student ratio to address a child’s academic or behavioral needs.

INTENSIVE Level Instruction: Academic and/or behavioral support characterized by increased length, frequency and duration of implementation for students who struggle significantly. This support relates directly to an area of need; is supplemental to and is different from CORE and TARGETED instruction; is usually implemented individually or in very small group settings; may be individualized.

Intervention: The systematic and explicit instruction provided to accelerate growth in an area of identified need. Interventions are provided by both special and general educators, and are based on training, not titles. This instruction is designed to improve performance relative to specific, measurable goals. Interventions are based on valid information about current performance, realistic implementation and include ongoing student progress monitoring.

Measurable Outcomes: The statement of a single, specific desired result from an intervention. To be measurable, the outcome should be expressed in observable and quantifiable terms (i.e., Susie will demonstrate mastery of grade-level basic math calculation skills as measured by a score of 85% or better on the end of the unit test on numerical operations).

Multi-level Model: Common model of three or more levels that delineate levels of instruction based on student skill need.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS): An operational framework focused on creating and sustaining CORE, TARGETED and INTENSIVE systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all students by making targeted behaviors less effective, efficient and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

Problem-Solving Process: Assumes that no type of instruction will be effective for all students; generally has five stages (problem identification, problem analysis, plan development, plan implementation and plan evaluation); is sensitive to individual student differences; depends on the integrity of implementing levels of INTENSIVE instruction.

Problem-Solving Team: A collaborative team (which includes parents, general and special educators) that meets to evaluate student data and to plan and monitor the impact of prescribed instruction. Problem-solving teams may examine student, class, program or school data.
Progress Monitoring: Progress monitoring is the ongoing process that involves collecting and analyzing data to determine student progress towards specific skills or general outcomes. Progress monitoring generates useful data for making instructional decisions based on the review and analysis of student data. Monitoring student progress, through collection and analysis of data, is an effective way to determine if the instruction being delivered is meeting the needs of the student.

Research-based Instructional Practice: A research-based instructional practice is one found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the practice is used with a particular group of students, the students can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice. In the absence of evidence, the instruction must be considered “best practice” based on available research and professional literature.

Response to Intervention (RTI) Also Response to Instruction/Responsiveness to Intervention: Practice of providing high-quality instruction matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make changes in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions. SPL incorporates and builds on processes formerly implemented in WV as RTI.

Scaffolding: An instructional technique, in which the teacher breaks a complex task into smaller tasks, models the desired learning strategy or task, provides support as students learn to do the task and then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. In this manner, a teacher enables students to accomplish as much of a task as possible without adult assistance.

Screening: Screening is the first level of assessment. School-wide screening and classroom-based screening can assist teachers in getting an initial sense of student performance relative to critical skills and behaviors and can used to inform decisions about grouping.

Section 504 Plan: A document for a student eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as having a disability that substantially limits one or more of the student’s major life activities and needs accommodations to access education.

Standard Treatment Protocol Intervention: Use of same empirically validated intervention for all students with similar academic or behavioral needs; facilitates quality control.

Summative Assessment: Assessments designed to provide information regarding the level of student, school or program success at a point in time (FAST, SCASS, 2012).

Support for Personalized Learning (SPL): SPL is a framework that promotes a well-integrated system connecting general, scaffolded and special education in providing high quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to students’ academic, social/emotional and behavioral needs.

TARGETED Level Instruction: Support that relates directly to an area of need; is supplementary to CORE instruction; is often implemented in small group settings; may be individualized.

Trend line: Line on a graph that connects data points; compare against aimline to determine responsiveness to instruction.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Process of designing instruction that is accessible by all students; UDL includes multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression, and multiple means of engagement; the focus in creation of UDL curricula is on technology and materials.
• Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
• Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST)
• Policy 4373: Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools
• Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities and Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities, WVDE.
• Policy 2510: Assuring Quality of Education: Regulations for Education Programs
• Policy 2512: Instructional Supports for Third and Eighth Grade Students to Achieve Critical Skills
• Response To Intervention-Idaho: Connecting the Pieces, prepared by the Idaho State Department of Education, June 2009.
• State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS)
• The Student Assistance Team and the Three-Tier Model of Student Intervention: A Guidance and Resource Manual for New Mexico’s Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework prepared by the New Mexico Public Education Department, Fall 2009.
• West Virginia Response to Intervention: An Implementation and Technical Assistance Guide For Districts and Schools, October 2006.
Resources

- CCSSO FAST SCASS
  http://ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Formative_Assessment_for_Students_and_Teachers_(FAST).html
- Council for Exceptional Children at http://www.cec.sped.org
- Easy CBM at http://www.easycbm.com/
- Chart dog at http://www.interventioncentral.org/tools/chart_dog_graph_maker
- Florida Center for Reading Research at www.fcr.org
- Intervention Central website at www.interventioncentral.org
- OSEP Center on Positive Interventions and Behavioral Supports at http://www.pbis.org/
- Teach 21 at http://wvde.state.wv.us/teach21/
- The Center on Instruction at www.centeroninstruction.org
- The National Center on RTI at www.rti4success.org
- The RTI Action Network at www.rtinetwork.org