American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: Using *ARRA* Funds Provided Through Part B of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* to Drive School Reform and Improvement

The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* of 2009 *(ARRA)* provides approximately 100 billion dollars to save and create jobs and to reform education through various funding streams, including: Part B of *IDEA (IDEA Part B);* Title I, Part A of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA)*; and the *State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF)*. This short-term influx of additional funding is a historic opportunity to improve American education. This document provides guidance on possible uses of *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds that are likely to have an impact on student learning outcomes and school reform.

On April 24, 2009, the Department released *Using ARRA Funds to Drive School Reform and Improvement,* [1] which was intended to spark ideas on how schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) could use these one-time funds over the next 2 years to improve results for all students, including students with disabilities; accelerate reform; increase long-term capacity for improvement; avoid the funding cliff; and improve productivity.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide information related to *IDEA Part B* funds made available under *ARRA*. This guidance builds on the April 24, 2009 document by providing: (1) additional examples of potential *ARRA* expenditures that are relevant to improving results for students with and without disabilities; (2) more detailed explanations for all of the examples; and (3) suggestions regarding the coordinated use of funds to support some of the examples. Recognizing that many LEAs may need to use a large portion of the *ARRA* funds to support teacher salaries or other critical short-term needs, this guidance suggests how LEAs can also use these funds to support activities that increase the capacity of LEAs and schools to improve results for students with and without disabilities in a manner that is consistent with regulatory requirements and OMB guidance and in coordination with other funding sources including their regular *IDEA Part B* allocation.

Please note that the examples are not meant to cover every possible use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds. They represent potential uses of funds to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities from early learning through high school and are intended to generate discussions within LEAs and schools regarding effective uses of *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds.

IDEA Part B ARRA funds should be viewed as a supplement to the regular FY 2009 *IDEA* grant funds. As such, all *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds must be used consistent with the current *IDEA Part B* statutory and regulatory requirements and applicable requirements in the General Education Provisions Act and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations. An LEA must use *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds only for the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities, except where *IDEA* specifically provides otherwise. The following Web site provides additional guidance regarding the use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds: http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/idea-b.pdf.

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[1] http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/uses.doc

General Considerations

In planning for the use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds, LEAs may consider four approaches that are particularly important to effect coherent, effective, and sustainable reforms. These approaches are: (1) aligning with *ARRA's* reform goals; (2) supporting students with disabilities in the context of schoolwide reforms; (3) ensuring strategies are data-driven and evidence-based; and (4) increasing capacity and productivity.

First, LEAs are encouraged to consider strategies and activities that are consistent with *ARRA's* four reform goals: (1) increasing teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution of effective teachers; (2) adopting rigorous college and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments; (3) establishing data systems and using data for improvement; and (4) turning around the lowest-performing schools. To help State educational agencies (SEAs) and LEAs align their planning and discussions about *IDEA* with their overall reform efforts, suggestions for uses of funds in this guidance document are organized around three of the reform goals. This guidance does not contain a separate section addressing the goal of turning around the lowest-performing schools because all of the examples can support meeting that goal.

Second, planning for effective uses of *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds should be done within the broader context of schoolwide reform initiatives that are designed to improve learning outcomes for all students. In 2007, 80 percent of all students with disabilities spent at least some portion of their day in a regular education classroom. Fifty-seven percent spent 80 percent or more of their time in a regular education classroom. LEAs are encouraged to use *IDEA* funds in the context of their overall plans for systemic school reform. In appropriate cases, they may coordinate the use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds with funds from other sources (e.g., regular *IDEA Part B* allocation, *ESEA*, *SFSF*, and State and local) consistent with Federal program requirements in schoolwide initiatives to improve outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities. In other situations, LEAs may use *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds to exclusively support the unique special education and related services needs of students with disabilities in ways that complement the LEA's overall school reform activities. Prior to making decisions about how to spend *ARRA* funds, LEAs and schools should consider the views of a wide array of stakeholders, including general and special education LEA and school leaders, as well as teachers, students, and families and review existing data, identify areas of greatest need, and focus on effective strategies that are consistent with their overall plan for improving student achievement effectively within 2 years.

Third, LEAs should seek to ensure that activities and initiatives supported using *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds are data-driven and evidence-based to increase the likelihood that such activities will improve student learning outcomes. Thus, LEAs should consider using *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds to support data analyses that help them better understand and address critical issues such as: (1) patterns of student achievement and student assignment to interventions within and across schools to determine whether appropriate interventions for students with disabilities are available; (2) the placement patterns (restrictiveness of placement) of students with disabilities and whether these placements may inhibit effective and efficient instruction and service delivery; (3) disproportionate representation in the identification and disciplining of students with disabilities; (4) special education staffing needs by subject, school, grade span, and expertise; and (5) the development of effective strategies to address special education staffing needs through recruitment, alternative or dual certification programs, professional development, and retention strategies. Based on an understanding of student, teacher, and school needs, LEAs

should support the redesign of programs, service delivery, and implementation of evidence-based classroom interventions. LEAs and schools often implement a myriad of conflicting interventions that lack fidelity and consistency over time. In supporting the implementation of classroom interventions, LEAs should attend to fidelity (i.e., ensuring that interventions are implemented consistent with the research upon which they are based), sustainability (i.e., ensuring that interventions are effectively maintained over time through persistent and skillful support for teachers, staff, and school leadership), and progress tracking (i.e., explaining how they will track progress in order to make adjustments and improve over time).

Finally, because *ARRA* funds are available for only 2 years, LEAs should consider how to use these short-term funds to build organizational and staff capacity for sustaining reform efforts when *ARRA* funding ends. Moreover, given the current economic conditions and the resulting uncertainty about the levels of State and local funding that will be available for education over the next few years, it is particularly important for LEAs to consider how to improve productivity and how to invest *ARRA* funds in ways that are likely to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.

Uses of Funds under *IDEA*

The purpose of *IDEA Part B* grants is to assist States, outlying areas, freely associated States, and the Secretary of the Interior to provide special education and related services to children with disabilities, including that children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The term FAPE[2] refers to special education and related services that are designed to meet a child's unique needs and that will prepare the child for further education, employment, and independent living. In general, *IDEA Part B* funds must be used only to pay the excess costs of providing FAPE to children with disabilities, such as costs for special education teachers and administrators; related services providers (speech therapists, psychologists, etc.); materials and supplies for use with children with disabilities; professional development for special education personnel; professional development for regular education teachers who teach children with disabilities; and specialized equipment or devices to assist children with disabilities. Generally *IDEA* funds cannot be used for core instruction in the general education classroom, instructional materials for use with non-disabled children, or for professional development of general education teachers not related to meeting the needs of students with disabilities, except as described below. Two exceptions to these guidelines are when *IDEA Part B* funds are used for coordinated early intervening services[3] (CEIS) or are consolidated in a Title I schoolwide school (under *ESEA)*.

LEAs may use up to 15 percent of their *IDEA Part B* funds for CEIS to assist students in grades K through 12 (with an emphasis on K through 3) who are not currently identified as needing special education and related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.[4] CEIS funds can be used to provide professional development[5] to educators who are responsible for helping children who need additional

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[2] *IDEA* Section 602 (9) The term `free appropriate public education' means special education and related services that--
   (A) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;
   (B) meet the standards of the State educational agency;
   (C) include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and
   (D) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program required under section 614(d).
[3] Note: The calculation for the maximum CEIS funds is based on the total of the regular *IDEA, Part B* allocations plus *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds.
[4] *IDEA* Section 613(f).
[5] *IDEA* Section 613(f)(2)(A).

academic and behavioral support succeed in a general education environment or to provide direct interventions to children who need academic and behavioral support. CEIS funds may be used in coordination with ESEA funds but must supplement, and not supplant, ESEA funds for those activities.[6]

A Title I schoolwide school may use, to carry out the schoolwide project, an amount of *IDEA* funds that is the same proportion of the total cost of the project as the number of children with disabilities benefiting from the program is to the total school population participating in the program. In a Title I schoolwide school that consolidates Federal funds (e.g., *ESEA*, *IDEA*, etc.), a school may use those funds for any activity in its schoolwide plan without accounting separately for the funds.[7] The schoolwide school needs to ensure that children with disabilities continue to receive FAPE, but would not need to show that *IDEA* funds were spent only on allowable special education and related services expenditures.[8]

The following sections include examples of how *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds could be used over the next 2 years to improve student outcomes and to advance systemic reforms that will have an enduring impact. The examples included in this document are in no way exhaustive nor should they be seen as a required "menu" from which to choose. However, most of the examples were included based on questions the Department of Education received from States and LEAs regarding the appropriateness of using *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds to support a particular strategy. In using *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds, LEAs are encouraged to develop or build on existing strategies; to use the best available evidence about effective interventions; and to be cognizant of the interests and needs of their students, families, and community. Any LEA or school strategy should be based on the LEA's data and context.

The examples in this document are provided to help stimulate conversations among LEA and school leaders as they consider the best way to spend *IDEA Part B* and other *ARRA* funds in ways that improve results for students and to demonstrate that *IDEA Part B* funds can be used for a wide variety of strategies to improve student outcomes. Many of these examples focus on schoolwide initiatives that address the needs of students with and without disabilities. To implement these schoolwide initiatives effectively, LEAs will need to coordinate the various funding streams consistent with program requirements. Further information on the programmatic and fiscal issues associated with schoolwide programs can be found in the *IDEA* Topic Brief entitled *Alignment with the No Child Left Behind Act,*[9] and in the *Designing Schoolwide Programs*[10] non-regulatory guidance. LEAs also are encouraged to use *IDEA Part B* funds available for CEIS strategically to support reform initiatives for struggling learners who are currently not receiving special education services.

Links to federally supported resources accompany all of the examples included in this document. The links provide additional information as well as some information regarding the research underlying each of the highlighted strategies. In addition, when appropriate, footnotes are provided whenever statutory language is referenced or text is quoted or paraphrased.

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[6] *IDEA* Section 613(f)(5).
[7] *ESEA* Section 1114.
[8] *IDEA* Section 613(a)(2)(D).
[9] http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home
[10] www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/designingswpguid.doc

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A. Increase teacher effectiveness and address inequities in the distribution of effective teachers

Effective teachers play a critical role in enhancing student learning outcomes, and effective principals play a critical role in enhancing the overall effectiveness of teachers. Improving teacher effectiveness as well as addressing inequitable teacher distribution generally requires a multi-faceted approach that focuses on, as appropriate, strategies such as: (1) recruitment and hiring to address shortages of special education and other teachers; (2) preservice preparation to produce new teachers; (3) strategic placement and distribution of teachers; (4) licensure; (5) professional development; (6) teacher evaluation; (7) teacher advancement; and (8) teacher compensation. It also requires attention to strong LEA and school leadership that support the conditions that foster teacher effectiveness and retention such as: time for collaboration, structured induction programs, and a culture of data-driven, continuous improvement. Increasing teacher effectiveness in improving results for students with disabilities should be considered in the context of a broader LEA human capital strategy. Given that most students with disabilities are in the regular classroom and are taught by general education teachers most of the day, recruiting highly qualified general education teachers and providing ongoing professional development for general classroom teachers to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to teach these students effectively, as well as equipping special education teachers with core academic content knowledge, is essential.

Initial interactions with States and LEAs suggest that many LEAs plan to use at least some of their *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds to support professional development activities. Because professional development is a key component of the schoolwide reform and *IDEA* specific suggestions included in other sections of this document, we have highlighted below the components of effective professional development that should be in place to achieve the maximum impact on teaching and learning.

Design considerations of effective professional development related to evidence-based practices and interventions

Professional development has traditionally been delivered to school staff through inservice workshops. Typically, the LEA or school uses an internal or external consultant on a staff-development day to give teachers a one-time training seminar on pedagogy, subject-area content or innovative practice. This approach has been routinely criticized for failing to take into account the complexity of the classroom and school environment and adult learning styles (e.g., need for follow-up support). In order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom, professional development must be: (1) delivered consistent with staff development standards such as those of the National Staff Development Council;[11] (2) based upon research and evidence;[12] (3) focused on classroom practices that will drive student achievement; (4) provided in enough depth to positively affect teacher performance; and (5) inclusive of follow-up activities to ensure the practice is implemented consistent with the training.

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[11] http://www.nsdc.org/standards/index.cfm
[12] http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pdf/evidence_based.pdf

Considerations of effective professional development for implementation of evidence-based interventions and practices

When planning professional development for implementation of evidence-based interventions and practices, whether through the use of internal staff or external consultants, LEAs are encouraged to address two critical factors: (1) fidelity of implementation (ensuring the implementation of an evidence-based intervention or practice is consistent with the research upon which it is based); and (2) sustainability (ensuring that the intervention or practice is effectively maintained over time through persistent and skillful support for teachers and staff).

Training is considered to have been put into practice with fidelity when the teacher or practitioner implements the intervention (e.g., the focus of the training) in the manner in which it was researched and designed. Implementing with fidelity is critical to achieving the same results that were achieved during the research. When revisions are made to a research-based practice, it is likely to affect student performance. Fidelity is frequently characterized as using the correct "amount of treatment" that was shown to be effective through the research. Typically, this relates to ensuring that implementation is consistent with research-based factors, such as:

- Group sizes
- Ages or grades of students
- Characteristics of students
- Length of sessions
- Frequency of sessions
- Location of sessions
- Qualifications or training of the instructor

Once implemented with fidelity, the challenge remains for practitioners to sustain the initiative. When training is comprised only of theory, discussion, demonstration, practice, and feedback, there is a limited chance that it will be used in the classroom. However, by adding coaching in the classroom there is a significantly greater probability that the training will be used and sustained. Coaching is a continuous process, providing teachers with feedback to enhance, maintain, or improve their performance. The coach observes performance, shares knowledge and expertise, and provides encouragement to continuously assist teachers in reaching higher levels of performance. The coaching approach encourages learning, growth, and teamwork all at the same time. The role of the coach is to support the teacher to effectively implement the practice with fidelity.

It should be stressed that sustainability and fidelity of implementation are interconnected factors that should be considered when implementing any new initiative across any content area. It is critical that school and LEA leaders be included in the training to ensure that staff receives the support they need to effectively implement the initiative. Obtaining the materials or training is the initial step; implementing with fidelity and using sustainable practices will ensure that the initiative continues to be effective after the *ARRA* funds expire.

This section provides the following examples for how *IDEA Part B* funds might be used to support improved teacher effectiveness:

- Dual certification

- Induction and mentoring
- Using technology in instruction
- Assistive technology

A-1. Dual Certification

The Challenge

IDEA requires that special education teachers teaching core academic subjects meet the requirements of *ESEA*, including that they be 'highly qualified.'[13] Improving outcomes for students with disabilities has been historically affected by the lack of an adequate supply of well-prepared teachers. Many States report a chronic and pervasive shortage of special education teachers, especially those with core academic content knowledge, and this shortage is expected to increase over time. In addition, underqualified teachers are frequently disproportionately employed in urban, poor, and rural LEAs and schools.

Potential Strategy

LEAs and schools are encouraged to develop partnerships with institutions of higher education (IHEs) and recognized alternative certification programs to enable teachers to obtain either dual certification or certification as a highly qualified special education teacher, especially for teachers in urban, poor, and rural areas. General education teachers could earn special education certification, and special education teachers could earn content certification and demonstrate mastery in a subject area. Job-relevant clinical experiences and general education and special education collaboration practices should be core principles in this strategy to ensure maximum flexibility to meet the diverse learning needs of all students in the LEA and school.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds at the LEA level include:

- Supporting the costs of teachers of students with disabilities participating in high-quality certification programs that increase teachers' effectiveness in improving outcomes for students with disabilities
- Funding site-based, job-embedded professional development for special educators that leads to certification in content area(s) through partnerships with IHEs and/or recognized alternative certification programs
- Funding site-based, job-embedded professional development for general educators that leads to certification in special education through partnerships with IHEs and/or recognized alternative certification programs
- Hiring effective, dually certified special education teachers in the highest need LEAs

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[13] *IDEA* Section 612(a)(14)(C).

Potential Impact

Supporting dual certification opportunities for teachers in special education and academic content areas may:

- Build capacity at difficult-to-staff schools, particularly rural schools
- Increase recruitment of special education teachers, including teachers in urban, poor, and rural LEAs
- Drive the expansion of rigorous alternative certification routes that are currently available in many States
- Improve outcomes for students with disabilities in academic subjects when general education teachers who teach students with disabilities have the skills needed to provide differentiated instruction
- Expand the pool of qualified special educators

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://www.tqsource.org
- http://www.personnelcenter.org
- http://www.iriscenter.com

A-2. Induction and Mentoring

The Challenge

Throughout the United States, there is a chronic and pervasive shortage of special education teachers and this shortage is expected to increase over time. This is particularly true in high-need and high-poverty LEAs where the recruitment of effective and certified special education teachers is challenging and where new teachers leave the classroom at very high rates.

Potential Strategy

A comprehensive novice teacher induction program that includes structured mentoring can decrease the likelihood of teachers leaving the field or changing schools. Comprehensive induction programs generally include regular mentoring (including observation and feedback on classroom teaching), opportunities to observe other teachers in their classrooms, provision of useful materials and resources, collaborative work with other new teachers, and professional development on topics important to new teachers such as classroom management; lesson planning; differentiated instruction; time management; and relationships with students, families, colleagues, and administrators. Mentoring should link special education mentors with novice special education teachers.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds at the LEA level include:

- Funding induction programs that use evidence-based practices such as creating ongoing support and opportunities for interaction between novice and experienced special education teachers (e.g., classroom observations, advising, group meetings for grade-level teams, and networking within and outside of the school)
- Hiring, as needed, substitute teachers to provide release time for special education teacher mentors
- Training mentors in adult development and learning, conferencing skills, and relationship and communication skills to work with special education teachers
- Funding induction and mentoring programs for special educators in the highest-need LEAs

Potential Impact

Supporting induction and mentoring programs may:

- Increase novice teacher retention
- Improve instructional effectiveness
- Develop and maintain a sense of satisfaction in novice teachers

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://www.tqsource.org
- http://www.coe.ufl.edu/copsse/research-focus-areas/supply-demand.php
- http://www.personnelcenter.org/materials.cfm

A-3. Using Technology in Instruction

The Challenge

Over the last several years schools have invested millions of dollars acquiring and maintaining educational technologies to enhance teacher classroom effectiveness and improve educational outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. However, in many LEAs, school personnel are not adequately trained and prepared to use the technologies to teach more effectively and to differentiate instruction according to individual student needs and characteristics. As a result, the educational technologies are not being well integrated into instruction and these often costly educational technologies are not yielding their potential benefits.

Potential Strategy

LEAs could carry out planning, training, and other activities that increase the capacity of LEA staff, school leaders, teachers, special education personnel, and students and their families, including those in high-need LEAs to use technology to improve access, instruction, and educational results. To coordinate such an effort, a LEA might task an existing or new "technology committee" to develop and coordinate a LEA Technology plan[14] to help teachers and students use technology more effectively and meaningfully in a wide range of tasks that are central to teaching and learning.[15]

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B* funds at the LEA level include:

- Paying for staff time outside the school day and for substitute teachers for release time during the school day, so special education staff, including those in high-need LEAs, may engage in a technology self-assessment and strategic planning
- Purchasing technology hardware and software consistent with the LEA's established technology integration plans to improve achievement for students with disabilities and to increase their access to the curriculum
- Providing professional development and technical assistance to special education staff, including those in high-need LEAs, regarding the purchase and use of instructional technology
- Promoting the effective use of technology to improve instruction for students with disabilities by providing professional development and technical assistance and developing teacher mentor programs and communities of practice
- Building internal staff capacity and expertise through professional development to support the use of instructional technology for special education when *ARRA* funds are no longer available

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[14] LEAs that receive a Title II-D subgrant from their State under the *ESEA* already have a technology plan.
[15] http://www.cited.org

Potential Impact

Supporting the effective use of instructional technology may:

- Enhance classroom teacher effectiveness
- Increase student achievement and motivation
- Facilitate differentiated instruction
- Improve student academic achievement[16]

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://www.cited.org
- http://www.nationaltech*cent*er.org
- http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc

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[16] Additional information and resources can be found at http://www.recovery.gov/?q=content/program-plan&program_id=7598

A-4. Assistive Technology

The Challenge

Assistive technology (AT) can help a child with a disability perform activities that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. *IDEA* requires Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams to consider a child's need for AT devices and services as they develop the IEP,[17] and schools may be required to supply AT devices and services to allow a child with a disability to receive FAPE. Unfortunately, in some cases, the benefits of AT devices and services are not fully realized because the technology does not match the child's needs and capabilities, or because training and support are not provided to the child or to the child's teachers or parents. In some cases, AT devices and services remain unused or underutilized and the child's need for AT devices and services goes unmet.

Potential Strategy

Assistive Technology is most beneficial when it is selected and used in the context of collaboration between teachers and other service providers, administrators, IEP teams, parents, and in many cases the child for whom the AT is intended. A systematic analysis should be made of the child's specific needs and abilities, the environments in which the child must function, the tasks the child must perform, and the AT devices that may benefit the child. After the AT device is acquired, continued training and support should be available to ensure that the AT has maximum benefit**.**

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds at the LEA level include:

- Purchasing AT devices and services for students with disabilities and providing training for teachers and other service providers, administrators, parents, and children including those in the highest-need LEAs
- Establishing AT labs or lending libraries with a collection of AT devices and materials for use in AT evaluations and training
- Providing training on how to conduct a systematic analysis of the child's specific needs and abilities, the environments in which the child must function, the tasks the child must perform, and the AT devices that may benefit the child

Potential Impact

Supporting the expanded use of AT devices and services may:

- Improve access to educational opportunities and the general education curriculum
- Improve the integration of students with disabilities into classroom activities
- Improve academic and functional skills
- Improve postschool outcomes

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[17] *IDEA* Section 614(d)(3)(B)(v).

- Facilitate differentiated instruction

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://www.assistivetech.net
- http://www.cited.org
- http://natri.uky.edu

B. Adopting rigorous college and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments

World-class education systems that drive improved student outcomes are built upon college and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments aligned with those standards. LEAs can support the core curricula through the implementation of multi-tiered interventions and instructional approaches that support students' access to rigorous standards and effective assessment systems to improve achievement outcomes. Since the strategies that follow apply to children with and without disabilities, strategically coordinating a variety of funding sources (e.g., *IDEA Part B ARRA*, regular *IDEA, ESEA, SFSF*, and State and local funds), consistent with program requirements is essential to support their implementation. By incorporating the principles of universal design for learning, LEAs and schools can strengthen access to the curriculum and assessments for students with and without disabilities. LEAs should use data to inform the selection and adoption of the interventions described below, and then continuously monitor their implementation and success.

This section provides examples of how *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds might be used to support strategies that can contribute to high-quality curriculum and instruction aligned with State standards. Most of the following strategies could be used as part of comprehensive efforts to turn around low-performing schools:

- Universal design for learning
- Response to intervention
- Adolescent literacy interventions
- Mathematics instructional interventions
- Schoolwide behavior interventions
- Promoting social and emotional development of young children
- Secondary transition services

B-1. Universal Design for Learning

Universal design for learning (UDL) is an approach that addresses a primary barrier to making expert learners of all students: an inflexible, one-size-fits-all curriculum that unintentionally impedes or hinders learning. Learners with disabilities are most vulnerable to such barriers, but many students without disabilities also find that the curriculum – including its goals, methods, assessments, and materials – are poorly designed to meet their learning needs. UDL practices benefit all students while harming no students.

The Challenge

Wherever individuals are gathered, including schools, diversity is the norm and not the exception. When the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the broad middle, at the exclusion of those with differing abilities, learning styles, backgrounds, and even preferences, it fails to provide all individuals with fair and equal opportunities to learn. Although UDL represents a promising approach to facilitate the engagement in learning for a diverse range of learners, educators often do not have the knowledge, skills, or resources to implement a UDL approach.

The *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 1965,* as amended by the *Higher Education Opportunity Act* (Pub. L. No. 110-315-(HEA), defines UDL as a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that: (1) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (2) reduces barriers in instruction; provides appropriate accommodations; and supports, challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient. A universally designed curriculum is designed from the outset to meet the needs of the greatest number of users, making costly, time-consuming, and after-the-fact changes to curriculum unnecessary. The application of UDL approaches in K-12 settings would mirror the policies reflected in the HEA's accountability provisions related to the preparation of teachers[18] and the requirements for demonstration projects to enhance the accessibility of postsecondary education for students with disabilities.[19]

Three primary principles guide UDL and provide structure for its implementation:

- **Principle I: Provide Multiple Means of Representation**. Students differ in the ways that they perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them. There is no one means of representation (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.) that would be optimal for all students; providing multiple options in representation is essential.
- **Principle II: Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression**. Students differ in the ways that they can navigate a learning environment and express what they know. There is no one means of expression (e.g., single switch, keyboard, joystick, etc.) that would be optimal for all students; providing multiple options for expression is essential.
- **Principle III: Provide Multiple Means of Engagement**. Students differ markedly in the ways in which they can be engaged or motivated to learn. There is no one means of representation (e.g., choices and opportunities for personal control, varying the level of sensory stimulation, etc.) that would be optimal for all students; providing multiple options for engagement is essential.

Potential Strategy

Utilize UDL approaches to meet the challenge of diversity by supporting flexible instructional materials and the techniques and strategies that empower educators to address the needs of students with disabilities and other at-risk learners.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement UDL

UDL is a schoolwide tool that addresses the needs of students with and without disabilities. Statutorily authorized strategies to coordinate funding sources to implement a UDL schoolwide environment include:

- LEAs could use *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds in coordination with other funds (e.g., regular *IDEA Part B* allocation, *ESEA*, *SFSF*, and State and local) consistent with program requirements, to support the use of UDL approaches and strategies in a school that uses

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[18] *HEA* Section 205(a)(1)(F).
[19] *HEA* Section 762(b)(2)(A).

UDL strategies as a component of a schoolwide program under Title I of *ESEA*. The amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that can be used in any such program can be no more than the number of children with disabilities participating in the schoolwide program times the amount provided per child with a disability under the LEA's total *IDEA Part B* award.[20]

- LEAs can use *IDEA Part B* CEIS funds to support students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are currently not receiving special education and related services and who need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in the regular education environment. CEIS funds may be used in coordination with ESEA funds, but must supplement and not supplant ESEA funds for those activities.[21]
- In a Title I targeted assistance school or a non-Title I school, to implement UDL approaches and strategies as a component of a schoolwide instructional approach, LEAs could use an amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that is the same proportion of the total cost of the program as the number of special education and related services personnel receiving professional development is to the total school personnel participating in the professional development subject to meeting excess costs, supplement not supplant, and maintenance of effort requirements.

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds described above at the LEA level include:

- Purchasing assessments that utilize UDL approaches to ensure that assessments of students with unique learning needs are valid measures of their knowledge
- Providing professional development related to UDL approaches and strategies for supporting emergent literacy, reading and math instruction, learners with disabilities in K-12, and the use of new technologies with evidence-based strategies for improved outcomes
- Providing professional development related to the implementation of embedded assessments intended to inform the development of improved teaching and learning strategies
- Purchasing consultant services to plan and implement new learning environments supportive of all learners within inclusive settings

Additionally, *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds may be used for:

- Providing professional development related to the implementation of appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities on large scale assessments
- Providing professional development related to the acquisition and use of specialized formats to support students with disabilities within the least restrictive environment
- Acquiring and implementing technologies and specialized formats for students with print disabilities who qualify for National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard derived textbooks in accordance with the Library of Congress National Library Service guidelines and for other students with disabilities who may not qualify under the four categories supported by the Chafee Amendment to Copyright Law

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[20] *IDEA* Section 613(a)(2)(D).
[21] *IDEA* Section 613(f).

Potential Impact

Supporting a schoolwide UDL initiative may result in the:

- Development and implementation of rich and flexible curricula designed to address a diverse learner population right from the start
- Introduction of new evidence-based strategies that positively affect learning goals, methods, materials, and assessments
- Creation of new perspectives on the meaning of ability and disability while promoting optimal support by means of improved general education curricula
- Improvement of student engagement and appropriate balance of challenge and support
- Reduction of barriers to improve learning outcomes for all, especially at-risk learners

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/UDL/index.asp
- http://www.cast.org/
- http://www.cast.org/publications/UDLguidelines/version1.html
- http://www.cast.org/pd/arra/index.html
- http://www.udlcenter.org/

B-2. Response to Intervention

The Challenge

All education programs face the challenge of establishing an instructional framework that ensures that all students have access to high-quality instruction that meets their needs and leads to positive outcomes. In addition, LEAs are required to ensure that in making a determination of eligibility for special education, a child shall not be determined to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor is lack of appropriate instruction in math or reading, including the essential components of reading instruction (as defined in section 1208(3) of the *ESEA*).[22]

Potential Strategy

A multi-tiered instructional framework, sometimes referred to as Response to Intervention, is a schoolwide approach that addresses the needs of all students, including struggling learners and students with disabilities, and integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level instructional and behavioral system to maximize student achievement and reduce problem behaviors. With a multi-tiered instructional framework, schools identify students at-risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions, and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

A multi-tiered instructional framework addresses the needs of students with and without disabilities. Statutorily authorized strategies to coordinate funding sources to implement a multi-tiered instructional framework include:

- LEAs could use *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds in coordination with other funds (e.g., regular *IDEA Part B* allocation, Title I *ESEA, SFSF*, and State and local), consistent with program requirements, to implement a schoolwide multi-tiered instructional framework in a school that operates a schoolwide program under Title I of *ESEA*. The amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that can be used in any such program cannot be more than the number of children with disabilities participating in the schoolwide program times the amount provided per child with a disability under the LEA's total *IDEA Part B* award. [23]
- LEAs can use *IDEA Part B* CEIS funds to support students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are currently not receiving special education and related services and who need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in the regular education environment. CEIS funds may be used in coordination with ESEA funds, but must supplement and not supplant ESEA funds for those activities. [24]
  The following Web site provides more information on the use of *IDEA* and *ESEA* funds to implement a schoolwide multi-tiered intervention framework:
  http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/rti.html
- In a Title I targeted assistance school or a non-Title I school*,* to implement a schoolwide multi-tiered instructional framework, LEAs could use an amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that is the same proportion of the total cost of the program as the number of special

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[22] *IDEA* Section 614(b)(5).
[23] *IDEA* Section 613(a)(2)(D).
[24] *IDEA* Section 613(f).

education and related services personnel receiving professional development is to the total school personnel receiving professional development, subject to meeting excess costs, supplement not supplant, and maintenance of effort requirements.

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds discussed above at the LEA level include:

- Developing an LEA strategy for implementing an RTI framework that provides guidance on tiers of instruction and the instructional approaches and programs appropriate for each tier, appropriate use of assessment data, supports needed for implementation, and evaluation of effectiveness of approach
- Purchasing curriculum-based screening and progress monitoring and formative assessment measurement instruments, and curriculum materials for intensive instruction
- Providing professional development for school or LEA staff to appropriately and effectively use the progress monitoring and formative assessment measurement instruments
- Providing professional development for school or LEA staff to appropriately and effectively implement evidence-based instructional and positive behavior practices

Additionally, *IDEA Part B* funds may be used for:

- Providing any special education and related services that is in a child's IEP, regardless of the tier the child is in.

Potential Impact

Supporting a schoolwide multi-tiered instructional framework may result in:

- Prevention or early identification of academic and behavior difficulties
- More accurate identification of students with disabilities
- Improved process for identifying students with learning disabilities or other disabilities
- Increased student achievement resulting from the use of evidence-based interventions for students experiencing difficulties
- Increased use of data to monitor student progress and revise instruction accordingly
- Reduction in the over-identification of students from minority backgrounds for special education

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://www.rti4success.org
- http://www.studentprogress.org

B-3. Adolescent Literacy Interventions

The Challenge

In 1998 only seven percent of students with disabilities were at or above proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 12th Grade Reading Language Arts assessment, and in 2005, the most recent test date, this rate decreased to six percent. The percentage of all students performing at or above Basic[25] decreased from 80 percent in 1992 to 73 percent in 2005, and the percentage of all students performing at or above the Proficient[26] level decreased from 40 to 35 percent. As these results indicate, there is a critical need to improve the literacy skills of adolescents. Reading is a vital skill that all students, with and without disabilities, need in order to achieve success in learning the complex content in their academic classes. Students without grade-level literacy skills are more likely to drop out of school, and they are rarely able to gain access to, or succeed in, postsecondary education. This, in turn, adversely affects their career opportunities and earning power.

Potential Strategy

Adolescent students with disabilities who are nonreaders or struggling readers, as well as other struggling readers can benefit from a comprehensive literacy program that includes: (1) direct, explicit comprehension instruction; (2) effective instruction tied to vocabulary, content, and texts students need for success in science, history, math, and other courses; and (3) intensive writing. The systematic implementation of evidence-based reading instruction can alter a student's trajectory of failure to one of success.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

Adolescent reading instruction is a schoolwide initiative that addresses the needs of students with and without disabilities. Statutorily authorized strategies to coordinate funding sources to implement an adolescent reading instructional program include:

- LEAs could use *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds in coordination with other funds (e.g., regular *IDEA Part B* allocation, *ESEA*, *SFSF*, and State and local) consistent with program requirements, to implement schoolwide adolescent literacy interventions in a school that operates a schoolwide program under Title I of *ESEA*. The amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that can be used in any such program can be no more than the number of children with disabilities participating in the schoolwide program times the amount provided per child with a disability under the LEA's total *IDEA Part B* award.[27]
- LEAs can use *IDEA Part B* CEIS funds to support students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are currently not receiving special education and related services and who need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in the regular education environment. CEIS funds may be used in coordination with ESEA funds, but must supplement and not supplant ESEA funds for those activities.[28]

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[25] http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/achieveall.asp
[26] http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/achieveall.asp
[27] *IDEA* Section 613(a)(2)(D)
[28] *IDEA* Section 613(f).

- In a Title I targeted assistance school or a non-Title I school, to implement schoolwide adolescent literacy interventions as a component of a schoolwide instructional approach, LEAs could use an amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that is the same proportion of the total cost of the program as the number of special education and related services providers receiving professional development or coaching is to the total school personnel. Participating in the program is   subject to meeting excess costs, supplement not supplant, and maintenance of effort requirements.

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds described above at the LEA level include:

- Purchasing evidence-based adolescent reading programs
- Purchasing progress monitoring tools
- Providing professional development for school staff across the content areas in the implementation of effective instruction for students with disabilities who are struggling readers
- Employing and training adolescent literacy coaches to provide ongoing training and support to teachers
- Developing schoolwide multi-tiered instructional programs that include a progress monitoring component, to promote student learning in English Language Arts and other academic areas, using coordinated funds, consistent with program requirements

Additionally, *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds may be used for:

- Supporting dual certification initiatives to ensure middle and high school teachers can effectively work with students with disabilities who are struggling readers
- Providing any special education and related services that is in a child's IEP, regardless of the tier the child is in.

Potential Impact

Supporting a schoolwide adolescent literacy program may:

- Increase student success in middle and high school
- Increase high school graduation rates
- Decrease dropout rates
- Improve college entrance exam scores
- Increase access to and success in higher education
- Increase access to a greater variety of work opportunities

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://centeroninstruction.org
- http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/smallbook.cfm
- http://www.rti4success.org

B-4. Mathematics Instructional Interventions

The Challenge

Success in mathematics provides students with college and career options and increases their prospects for future income. The gap in performance on the NAEP mathematics assessment between eighth grade students with and without disabilities who were at or above proficient between 1996 and 2007 increased by four percentage points to a 25 percentage point gap. The gap in performance for fourth graders increased by six percentage points to a 22 percentage point gap. Some experts say that five to eight percent of the student population exhibits significant difficulties in learning the mathematics competencies that are essential for succeeding in school and adulthood. These difficulties are sometimes associated with general developmental delays or with disabilities in areas outside mathematics, such as reading or behavior.

Potential Strategy

Students with disabilities or those at-risk for experiencing mathematics difficulties can benefit from a mathematics program that includes: (1) systematic, age-appropriate interventions involving meticulous and explicit instruction; (2) models of problem-solving; (3) guided practice; (4) corrective feedback; (5) visual representations; and (5) other elements as described in the Institute of Education Sciences Practice Guide.[29] Student progress should be monitored and instruction should be adjusted as needed.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

- LEAs could use *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds in coordination with other funds (e.g., regular *IDEA Part B* allocation, Title I *ESEA*, *SFSF*, and State and local) consistent with program requirements, to implement schoolwide mathematics interventions in a school that operates a schoolwide program under Title I of *ESEA*. The amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that can be used in any such program can be no more than the number of children with disabilities participating in the schoolwide program times the amount provided per child with a disability under the LEA's total *IDEA Part B* award. [30]
- LEAs can use *IDEA Part B* CEIS funds to support students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are currently not receiving special education and related services and who need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in the regular education environment. CEIS funds may be used in coordination with ESEA funds, but must supplement and not supplant ESEA funds for those activities. [31]
- In a Title I targeted assistance school or a non-Title I school, to implement schoolwide mathematics interventions as a component of a schoolwide instructional approach, LEAs could use an amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that is the same proportion of the total cost of the program as the number of special education and related services providers is to the total school personnel participating in the professional development activities, subject to meeting excess costs, supplement not supplant, and maintenance of effort requirements.

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[29] http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/rti_math_pg_042109.pdf
[30] *IDEA* Section 613(a)(2)(D).
[31] *IDEA* Section 613(f).

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B* funds described above at the LEA level include:

- Purchasing evidence-based mathematics screening instruments and intervention materials using coordinated funds
- Purchasing technical assistance and training in implementing mathematics strategies using coordinated funds
- Employing staff to provide technical assistance and training in implementing mathematics strategies using coordinated funds
- Developing multi-tiered intervention programs that include a progress monitoring component, to promote student learning in mathematics and other academic areas using coordinated funds consistent with program requirements

Additionally, *IDEA Part B* funds may be used for:

- Supporting dual certification initiatives to ensure middle and high school teachers can effectively work with students with disabilities who are struggling with math
- Providing any special education and related services that is in a child's IEP, regardless of the tier the child is in.

Potential Impact

Supporting a schoolwide mathematics initiative may:

- Increase achievement in mathematics areas such as number concepts, fluency, operations, and word problems
- Increase achievement in related academic areas

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/rti_math_pg_042109.pdf
- http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc
- http://dww.ed.gov

B-5. Schoolwide Behavior Intervention

The Challenge

Inappropriate student behavior impacts student achievement and it has been linked to loss of instructional time, poor attendance, reduced academic achievement, perceptions by students and staff of negative school climate, inadequate safety, poor standardized test performance, and increased dropout rates. Training in behavior management is the most frequently requested training by school staff.

Potential Strategy

There are multiple approaches that support positive school climates conducive to learning. Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is one example of a systems approach to establishing the social culture and behavioral supports needed for all children in a school to achieve both social and academic success. It is not a packaged curriculum, but an approach that includes specific core elements. A schoolwide behavior intervention should be an evidence-based, data-driven, multi-tiered system that creates positive schoolwide environments where disciplinary incidents, such as office referrals and suspensions are reduced, time spent on academic instruction increases, and attendance rates improve.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

Schoolwide behavior interventions address the needs of students with and without disabilities. Statutorily authorized strategies to coordinate funding sources to implement a schoolwide behavior intervention include:

- LEAs can use *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds in coordination with other funds (e.g. regular *IDEA Part B* allocation, Title I *ESEA, SFSF*, and State and local) consistent with program requirements, to implement a schoolwide behavior intervention program in a school that operates a schoolwide program under Title I of *ESEA*. The amount of *IDEA* funds that can be used in any such program cannot be more than the number of children with disabilities participating in the schoolwide program times the amount provided per child with a disability under the LEA's total *IDEA Part B* award.[32]
- LEAs can use *IDEA CEIS* funds to support students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are currently not receiving special education and related services and who need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in the regular education environment. CEIS funds may be used in coordination with ESEA funds, but must supplement and not supplant ESEA funds for those activities. [33]
- In a Title I targeted assistance school or a non-Title I school, to implement a schoolwide program of positive behavioral supports, LEAs could use an amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that is the same proportion of the total cost of the program as the number of special education and related services personnel participating in the program is to the total school personnel participating in the professional development, technical assistance and

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[32] *IDEA* Section 613(a)(2)(D).
[33] *IDEA* Section 613(f).

coaching activities, subject to meeting excess costs, supplement not *s*upplant, and maintenance of effort requirements.

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds described above at the LEA level include:

- Providing technical assistance and professional development for teachers, service providers, and school staff for training needed to initially implement and maintain the program
- Providing technical assistance and professional development for teachers, service providers, and school staff for training needed to initially implement and maintain the program, including the funding for substitutes for staff release time
- Employing and training for behavior coaches who would support the implementation of the program and train additional staff coaches to sustain the program
- A schoolwide data system that measures school climate in a rigorous way so that progress can be assessed and measured

Additionally, *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds may be used for:

- Providing the specific positive behavioral interventions and supports that are included in the IEPs of children with disabilities including the professional development of personnel (both special education and regular education) involved in providing those interventions

Potential Impact

Supporting a schoolwide behavior intervention program may:

- Reduce office referrals up to 50 percent per year
- Reduce suspension and expulsion rates up to 50 percent per year
- Improve attendance rates
- Improve academic achievement
- Decrease dropout rates
- Improve staff and student perceptions of school safety
- Improve safety conditions in schools
- Improve school climate
- Improve students' sense of belonging and connection to school

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://www.pbis.org
- http://www.challengingbehavior.org

B-6. Promoting the Social and Emotional Development of Young Children

The Challenge

The development of social competence is critically important to a child's later academic success and positive social relationships. Children with disabilities often face challenges in communicating with teachers and peers, following instructions, and using appropriate behaviors to achieve their goals. This can cause problems in and out of the classroom. Yet, most early childhood personnel do not have the skills they need to promote the social and emotional development of young children with disabilities and to prevent and address challenging behaviors. This concern is particularly relevant for young children who have, or are at-risk for, developmental delays or disabilities, and who need additional, targeted support to develop social and emotional competence.

Potential Strategy

LEAs could adopt an evidence-based multi-tiered framework for promoting social development and addressing challenging behavior in young children. A number of evidence-based models (e.g., models that include intensive individualized interventions; social and emotional teaching strategies; classroom preventive practices; and strategies to promote positive relationships among children, families, and colleagues) are currently available for promoting social development. The successful adoption of these models is reliant on the provision of high-quality, ongoing professional development and support through a cadre of trainers and classroom coaches who ensure that the models are implemented with fidelity. In addition, it is essential that an infrastructure is in place to sustain the ongoing training and support of practitioners.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

- LEAs may use *IDEA Part B* CEIS funds to support students in kindergarten who are currently not receiving special education and related services, but need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in the regular education environment. CEIS funds may be used in coordination with ESEA funds, but must supplement and not supplant ESEA funds for those activities. [34]
- LEAs may use *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds for professional development and coaching of special education and related services personnel on the implementation of the model selected.

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds described above at the LEA level include:

- Collaborating with other local early care and education programs to coordinate funds consistent with regulatory requirements, in order to provide professional development and fund the hiring and training of trainers and coaches to implement the model in a variety of settings with typically developing peers

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[34] *IDEA* Section 613(f)

- Providing technical assistance to build the capacity of their community or LEA, to develop the infrastructure needed to implement the multi-tiered model for promoting social development, including the training of trainers and coaches and the development of model demonstration sites using coordinated funds
- Hiring coaches to provide classroom and program support

Potential Impact

Supporting an evidence-based multi-tiered-framework for promoting social development and addressing challenging behavior in young children may:

- Lead to better social and emotional outcomes for all preschool-aged children, including those with and at-risk for developmental delays and disabilities
- Enhance the skills of early childhood professionals to promote social competence and addressing challenging behaviors
- Lead to early childhood professionals making decisions regarding interventions for children based on pertinent data
- Increase the availability of inclusive settings for young children with disabilities

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

www.challengingbehavior.org

B-7. Secondary Transition Services

The Challenge

The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is significantly higher than the rate for persons without disabilities. Academic success, educational attainment, and participation in career-related activities while in high school contribute to the participation of persons with disabilities in the workforce. However, data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study II indicate that 56 percent of students with disabilities received no career counseling, 86 percent received no training in job skills, and only 42 percent attended at least one postsecondary education class as contrasted with 53 percent of youth in the general population. Nearly half of the secondary school regular and special educators interviewed in a recent national study reported that they did not have the knowledge and skills to adequately provide transition services to youth with disabilities. Schools are faced with the challenge that, although data substantiates the link between transition services and postschool success of students with disabilities, there is a shortage of skilled transition personnel to provide or facilitate the transition services, including career counseling and training in job skills to ensure students with disabilities successfully transition to postschool employment or postsecondary education or training. In addition, there has been a historical lack of coordination between the school, the community, and the postschool adult service system.

Potential Strategy

Use transition personnel who possess the knowledge and skills to work effectively with teachers, businesses and employers, community colleges, technical schools, and IHEs to facilitate work-study opportunities, community service learning experiences, internships and exposure to, and experiences in, postsecondary education and employment environments for secondary school aged youth with disabilities in addition to providing career counseling and job skills training to those youth. In addition, creating an interagency transition system for students with disabilities that fosters coordination between the school, the community, and the postschool adult service system that can be sustained after *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds are spent, is another way to support successful postsecondary transition.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B* funds at the LEA level include:

- Hiring transition personnel who possess the knowledge and skills to work with teachers, businesses, employers, community colleges, technical schools, and IHEs to create an effective interagency transition system for students with disabilities that fosters interagency coordination between the school, the community, and the postschool adult service system
- Purchasing transition-curriculum and career assessment, exploration, and development tools for students with disabilities
- Providing technical assistance and professional development to enhance the knowledge and skills of special educators regarding transition strategies, including how to effectively use transition-curriculum and career assessment, exploration, and development tools

- Employing staff to provide technical assistance and professional development to enhance the knowledge and skills of special educators regarding transition strategies, including how to effectively use transition-curriculum and career assessment, exploration, and development tools
- Hiring consultants to integrate data regarding the provision of transition services to students with disabilities into other data collection systems to better support and track student outcomes

Potential Impact

Supporting coordinated and comprehensive transition systems with knowledgeable and skilled transition personnel may:

- Improve postschool outcomes for students with disabilities
- Strengthen interagency and school-business relationships within communities
- Increase the participation and contribution to our nation's workforce by persons with disabilities

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:
- www.nsttac.org
- http://www.rcep6.org/il/chirp/default.htm
- http://ncyt.fmhi.usf.edu.
- http://www.ncwd-youth.info

C. Establishing data systems and using data for improvement

Teachers and school leaders need to know how well their students are performing. Highly effective teachers are using real-time data in ways that would have been unimaginable just 5 years ago. Data-driven educational decision-making is more than a data system. It is a set of expectations and practices predicated on the ongoing examination of student data to ascertain the effectiveness of educational activities and subsequently to refine programs and practices to improve outcomes for students. In an education context, data-driven decision-making is the analysis and use of student data and information concerning educational resources and processes to inform resource allocation, student placement, and curriculum and instruction. The practice entails regular data collection and ongoing implementation of a continuous improvement process.

Most teachers report that they are learning these skills on the job rather than in the schools of education. Just as it is important to determine how to ensure that teachers come into the profession being able to use data to inform instruction, it is equally important that schools provide coherent, site-based, and job-embedded professional development to upgrade all teachers' skills in the use of data, including how to incorporate technology to support the use of data to inform instruction. The *ARRA* provides significant resources to support this effort.

This section provides the following examples of how *IDEA Part B* funds might be used to support strategies that can contribute to establishing data systems and using data for improvement of:

- Student progress monitoring
- Web-based IEPs
- Early childhood data systems

C-1. Student Progress Monitoring

The Challenge

Appropriate instruction and knowledge of student performance are critical to improving outcomes for all children, particularly for children who struggle with reading, mathematics, and spelling. Teacher or commercially developed assessments and end of chapter tests have traditionally been used to assess student mastery of specific concepts and skills. It has become increasingly important to collect and evaluate formative and interim assessment data to determine first, whether students are making progress toward short- and long-term instructional goals, and second, if they are responding to the instruction they receive so that instructional adjustments can be made to improve their rate of achievement. Regularly monitoring the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading or math disabilities and using progress monitoring data to determine when instructional changes are needed, are good educational practices but challenging to implement.[35]

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[35] http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/rti_math_pg_042109.pdf and
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/rti_reading_pg_021809.pdf

Potential Strategy

Progress monitoring helps teachers both identify which students are not making acceptable progress and make adjustments in instructional strategies until student achievement and the rate of student learning improves. Progress monitoring involves ongoing data collection to determine the adequacy of student progress over short periods of time as well as providing information about the rate of student progress to determine if the student will reach a goal in a specified period of time, such as reading at grade-level by the end of the school year. Depending on the rate of student progress, data collection can occur daily, weekly, or quarterly.

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

Student progress monitoring is a schoolwide tool that addresses the needs of students with and without disabilities. Statutorily authorized strategies to coordinate funding sources to implement student progress monitoring as a component of a schoolwide instructional approach include:

- LEAs could use *IDEA Part B* funds in coordination with other funds (e.g., regular *IDEA Part B*, Title I *ESEA*, *SFSF*, and State and local) consistent with program requirements, to support the use of student progress monitoring in a school that uses student progress monitoring as a component of a schoolwide program under Title I of *ESEA*. The amount of *IDEA* funds that can be used in any such program cannot be more than the number of children with disabilities participating in the schoolwide program times the amount provided per child with a disability under the LEA's total *IDEA Part B* award.[36]
- LEAs can use *IDEA* CEIS funds to support students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are currently not receiving special education and related services and who need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in the regular education environment. CEIS funds may be used in coordination with ESEA funds, but must supplement and not supplant ESEA funds for those activities.[37]
- In a Title I targeted assistance school or a non-Title I school, to implement student progress monitoring as a component of a schoolwide instructional approach, LEAs could use an amount of *IDEA Part B* funds that is the same proportion of the total cost of the professional development activities as the number of special education and related services personnel receiving professional development is to the total school personnel receiving professional development, subject to meeting excess costs, supplement not supplant, and maintenance of effort requirements.

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA* funds described above at the LEA level include:

- Purchasing student progress monitoring tools
- Training teachers and principals on using the progress monitoring tools
- Training teachers and principals on data collection and data-driven decisionmaking based on progress monitoring data
- Hiring coaches to provide teachers with strategies to enable them to make instructional changes in response to the data

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[36] *IDEA* Section 613(a)(2)(D).
[37] *IDEA* Section 613(f).

Potential Impact

Supporting a schoolwide student progress monitoring initiative may:

- Lead to early identification of students with academic difficulties and improved student achievement
- Improve teacher proficiency in using data to identify student needs and then provide appropriate instruction
- Increase ability to project student and schoolwide achievement levels
- Improve academic achievement for all students with disabilities

The following federally supported resources can provide additional information:

- http://www.studentprogress.org
- http://www.rti4success.org
- http://centeroninstruction.org

C-2. Web-Based IEPs

The Challenge

Under the IDEA, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the foundation for providing services to students with disabilities. It is the legal document that ensures that students eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment and have access to, and participate in, the general education curriculum. LEAs must ensure that IEPs meet detailed regulatory requirements, while simultaneously ensuring that students have genuine, meaningful opportunities to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum. LEAs are challenged to ensure IEP annual goals and short-term objectives are aligned with grade-level content standards to facilitate the participation of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum. LEAs are also challenged to ensure that IEPs expeditiously follow students who transfer between schools or LEAs.

Potential Strategy

- Use *IDEA Part B ARRA* funds to support the development and implementation of a Web-based IEP tool for students with disabilities that will result in IEPs that comply with the requirements of *IDEA*, support alignment of IEP goals and objectives with State academic achievement and grade-level content standards, and facilitate the transfer of the student's IEP between schools or jurisdictions. LEAs could collaborate with the SEA to create a multi-LEA or statewide version of the Web-based IEP. The IEP tool could include an integrated Web-based function that:

  o Provides prompts and instructions to meet the regulatory requirements of *IDEA Part B*
  o Assists with the selection of appropriate accommodations
  o Assists with the determination of whether or not a student requires AT and, if appropriate, the selection of appropriate AT
  o Has an embedded searchable version of the State or LEA academic content standards
  o Has sample instructional modules, lesson plans, and task analyses

  LEAs are encouraged to ensure that:

  o Sufficient resources are in place to maintain and revise any system developed
  o Training focuses on both how to use the Web-based technology and how to use the system to align instruction with the general education curriculum.
  o Training is provided to school staff to ensure that the IEPs focus on the unique individual needs of students

Use of *IDEA Part B ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

Specific activities that may be supported with *IDEA Part B* funds at the LEA level include:

- Developing and implementing a Web-based IEP system
- Providing professional development for teachers, service providers, and school leaders and ongoing coaching to effectively use this technology

Potential Impact

Student achievement is generally enhanced when students are held to high standards. A Web-based IEP system may:

- Help teachers generate high-quality IEPs by referencing the requirements from *IDEA*
- Support access to the general education curriculum through an embedded searchable version of the State academic achievement standards and grade-level content standards
- Provide professional development, as needed, as a component of the Web-based system
- Help students, parents, families, local school systems, and other stakeholders to locate student information and documentation quickly
- Provide a computerized and standardized IEP form that follows a student with a disability if the student should move from one school to another within an LEA or between LEAs
- Provide a legally sufficient document for monitoring and quality assurance activities
- Enable LEA administrative office desk audits to be conducted, which facilitates efficient and effective monitoring activities

The following federally supported resource can provide additional information:

- http://www.projectforum.org/docs/Standards-BasedIEPs-ImplementationinSelectedStates.pdf

C-3. Early Childhood Data Systems

The Challenge

Many LEAs face challenges relating to the collection, reporting, and use of longitudinal data, including child outcome data for preschool children with disabilities. LEAs are challenged to develop and maintain data systems that collect data on individual children during early childhood that are linked with data systems for programs serving children that are administered by other agencies such as Headstart and IDEA Part C. These data are critical to ensuring high-quality services and a smooth transition as children age and encounter different systems, programs, and providers of services.

Potential Strategy

IDEA Part B ARRA funds can be used to develop or enhance early childhood data systems to collect and maintain data on individual children with disabilities, including data on functional outcomes, and to link data on individual children with child data in other systems. Funds can be used to ensure that necessary protections are integrated into the data system to protect the privacy of student educational records while making it possible that persons with legitimate educational interest have access to necessary data in order to improve the quality of services and to address each individual child's needs effectively.

Use of *IDEA ARRA* Funds to Implement Strategy

LEAs could:

- Purchase hardware and software to enhance current data systems or purchase new data systems
- Hire consultants to address data challenges, including privacy concerns and cross-departmental technical and legal data transferability issues (e.g., Part C and Part B programs are administered by different departments such as States' Departments of Health and States' Departments of Education)
- Train personnel on how to use data for improving student outcomes
- Build a local longitudinal data system that is interoperable with any existing Statewide longitudinal data system
- Merge separate special education data systems into existing elementary, secondary, post-secondary, and workforce systems

Potential Impact

Supporting early childhood data systems may:

- Lead to more comprehensive and complete data that can be used by service providers to better address the range of needs of young children with disabilities
- Lead to better data for research and evaluation activities to examine the long-term impact and effectiveness of programs that serve young children with disabilities
- Yield data to meet State and Federal reporting requirements relating to the performance of programs serving young children with disabilities.

- Enhance the transition of children between systems resulting in a decrease in service interruption

The following federally supported resource can provide additional information:

- www.ideadata.org