

Recommendations for Building State Education Agency Capacity to Support Implementation of Data-Based Individualization

State education agencies (SEAs) have an important role in initiating, supporting, and sustaining district- and school-level implementation of intensive intervention for students with severe and persistent learning and behavior needs. Starting in 2016, the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) partnered with SEAs to build their capacity to implement data-based individualization (DBI), NCII's approach to intensive intervention. In September 2021, NCII brought together SEA personnel participating in NCII intensive technical assistance to identify recommendations for building SEA capacity to implement DBI. This document outlines five recommendations offered by SEA personnel who successfully led DBI capacity-building efforts in their states. More information about the participating SEAs and their [state implementation stories](#) is on the [NCII website](#).

The following table presents five recommendations for building SEA capacity to implement DBI. Each recommendation includes the following components:

- Tips for successful implementation based on lessons learned from participating SEA personnel
- Examples from SEAs highlighting how the recommendations were executed in the participating states



Tips and Examples for Building SEA Capacity

| Recommendation | Tips for successful implementation | Examples from SEAs implementing DBI |
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| <p>1. Develop a common understanding and shared goals for DBI implementation at the SEA.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct knowledge-building activities (e.g., training or self-study) to ensure that personnel understand DBI prior to implementation with local education agencies (LEAs). ▪ Engage stakeholders to create a common vision for DBI implementation. ▪ Anticipate and plan for turnover by developing an implementation plan that includes strategies for supporting new staff as they build DBI knowledge and implementation capacity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Texas, Washington, South Carolina, and Oregon participated in a baseline DBI knowledge assessment and subsequent DBI trainings to build foundational DBI knowledge and a common language. ▪ North Carolina established a vision for DBI that focused on closing student achievement gaps to promote equity and communicated this vision to key stakeholders. ▪ Texas learned that planning for sustainability was essential to ensure that DBI professional learning and guidance would continue when personnel leave and new staff are hired. |
| <p>2. Align DBI with other initiatives at the SEA.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze how DBI fits with existing initiatives (e.g., conduct an initiative inventory or crosswalk of DBI with existing multitiered systems of support [MTSS] and special education resources to identify similarities and differences). ▪ Involve personnel from multiple SEA offices who are leading related initiatives and ensure that special education personnel are involved with any SEA DBI initiative. ▪ Align DBI terminology and language across other state initiatives (e.g., MTSS, SSIP, dyslexia legislation, and school improvement). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Colorado conducted an inventory of problem-solving initiatives and collaborated across the Office of Learning Supports and the Exceptional Student Services Unit to create a DBI training series. ▪ Michigan aligned DBI implementation across statewide initiatives, including the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), MTSS technical assistance, and statewide literacy and dyslexia guidance. ▪ Rhode Island developed common language and terminology across three state initiatives that each focused on DBI and operationalized DBI within the state’s ongoing MTSS work. ▪ Wyoming selected DBI as the evidence-based practice for improving academic and behavior outcomes for students with disabilities as part of its SSIP. ▪ Oregon and South Carolina included DBI as a component of effective support for students with reading disabilities within the state’s dyslexia guidance. |



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| <p>3. Establish district buy-in and commitment to engage in DBI professional learning.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involve LEAs first, before schools, to establish commitment from leadership to engage in DBI professional learning and implementation. ▪ Create a memorandum of understanding that outlines expectations for ongoing participation in SEA-sponsored DBI professional learning. ▪ Identify funding sources to incentivize participation in SEA-sponsored DBI professional learning. ▪ Create a statewide network among LEAs that are implementing DBI and facilitate learning opportunities among the networked LEAs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Texas conducted a community of practice with district special education and MTSS leaders that included a book study and the development of district DBI implementation action plans. ▪ North Carolina used a selection process for participating LEAs and teachers to increase the likelihood of readiness to participate in DBI training and coaching. ▪ South Carolina found that district-level readiness and buy-in are key factors for successful DBI implementation. |
| <p>4. Develop ongoing DBI training structures.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus training content on the importance of data literacy, including in-depth training on progress monitoring and goal setting. ▪ Consider having training participants apply new skills by developing practice-based case studies as they learn the DBI process. ▪ Use statewide conferences as an opportunity to raise awareness of DBI across a broad group of stakeholders. ▪ Leverage existing resources and initiatives (e.g., SSIP, State Personnel Development Grants) to provide DBI training. ▪ Promote sustainability in schools implementing DBI by delivering new staff orientations and refresher trainings. ▪ Differentiate DBI training for administrators, coaches, and teachers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Colorado offered educators a range of training options, including DBI modules, a webinar series, and a hybrid in-person and virtual training series for school personnel. ▪ Rhode Island embedded DBI content within its learning management system—Bridge RI. ▪ Oregon conducted a series of webinars on a range of broad, fundamental topics covering high-quality, evidence-based support for students with intensive needs, including students with disabilities. ▪ North Carolina, Oregon, Washington, and Texas leveraged statewide conferences to reach a broader audience of stakeholders and raise awareness, visibility, and statewide knowledge of DBI. |



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| 5. Deliver ongoing coaching to support DBI implementation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify coaches with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – DBI knowledge and implementation experience, – experience in coaching teams, – adaptive skills (e.g., interpersonal and relationship-building skills), and – dedicated time to provide coaching. ▪ Ensure that coaches have a shared understanding of DBI and effective coaching practices at the onset of implementation. ▪ Develop a cadre of coaches at the LEA level to promote sustainability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Washington paired schools with a DBI implementation coach to provide systems coaching to support schools with implementing DBI. ▪ Wyoming trained six state-level coaches to work with LEAs and helped LEAs identify and train internal coaches. ▪ Rhode Island collaborated with NCII to develop a coaching guidance document that includes examples of how to structure coaching to support ongoing implementation of MTSS and DBI. |

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