

The Special Education Performance Diagnostic (SPD) is a research-informed, data-driven process designed to evaluate the overall health of a district's special education system. It supports districts in identifying and prioritizing key areas for continuous improvement as part of their strategic planning efforts. At the heart of the SPD is a comprehensive framework organized around levers, essential actions, and key practices that define what a district should do to ensure that students with disabilities are effectively served in schools.

- **Levers** describe broad areas of focus for districts related to diagnosing and improving the health of their special education systems.
- **Essential actions** within a lever describe what effective districts do to create, implement, and continuously improve special education systems that benefit students with disabilities.
- **Key practices** help define what the essential action entails when implemented with fidelity. They describe the highest-leverage activities for each essential action.

The SPD Framework provides a clear roadmap for districts to strengthen their special education systems and promote positive outcomes for all learners. The seven levers are summarized here:

Lever 1: Integrated Systems focuses on collaboration and integration of special education within district systems, as well as performance management for continuous improvement.

Lever 2: Talent addresses the hiring, support, and retention of skilled educators who serve students with disabilities.

Lever 3: Special Education Identification and Evaluation encompasses essential actions for multi-tiered systems of support, Child Find, evaluation, and reevaluation.

Lever 4: Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development addresses essential actions for Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committees, quality IEP content, and monitoring progress toward individual goals.

Lever 5: Special Education Service Delivery focuses on effective implementation of special education and related services as described in the IEP.

Lever 6: Meaningful Access promotes a systemwide culture, learning environment, and supports that allow students with disabilities to participate meaningfully in general education settings.

Lever 7: Family and Community Engagement encourages collaborative partnerships with families, caregivers, and the community to enhance educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Visit [SPD Introduction](#) to watch a video about the SPD.